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Among the early 17th century Persian literary works of Father Jerónimo Xavier, it was thought that the Four Gospels transcriptions made in Lahore in 1607, may be included. This possibility was first mentioned in 1848 by the Jesuit Fathers, Augustin and Aloys de Backer,[1] who declared the manuscript to be in Lisbon but were uncertain if it had ever been published. Later in the 19th century, Father Carlos Sommervogel, S. J.,[2] repeated this information. In this century, the quest continued in the important works of Sir Edward MacLagan,[3] Father Angel Santos Hernández, S. J.,[4] and Father Arnulf Camps, OFM.[5]

MacLagan's conclusion of 1932 was shared by Santos Hernández twenty years later; that is, it cannot be said definitely that a translation of the

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1 PERES AUGUSTIN ET ALOYS DE BACKER, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus,* 1848, T. 8, Ière Partie: Bibliographie cf. col. 1340. «10. Los quatro evangelhos em Persico, feitos do P. Yeronimo Xavier em Lahore corte de Moya in 1607. A Lisbonne. Cet ouvrage ne serait-il pas resté inédit?» JERÓNIMO XAVIER (Ezpeleta) born in 1549 in Beire, province of Navarra, Spain; great son of a sister of St. Francis Xavier, entered the Society of Jesus in 1568 in Alcalá; in 1581 he went from Portugal to Goa. When in India he was appointed Rector of the College Bassein and then of Cochin, thereafter he became Master of the Novices and Superior of the Profess house in Goa. From 1594 to 1614 he remained in the Moghul Empire at the court of Akbar and Jahangir. In the year 1616 he was appointed Rector of the College of St. Paul in Goa where he died tragically, burned alive in his cell on 17th June 1617.

2 Père C. S. SOMMERVOGEL, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus*. Nouvelle édition publiée par la Province de Belgique (1890—1898) Bibliographie T. VIII, Xavier col. 1340. MacLagan *INFRA* n. 3, as well as Angel Santos *INFRA* n. 4 and Arnulf Camps *INFRA* n. 5 also do not go further than reproducing the said quotation, though the last mentioned *op. c.*, p. 31 presuming it might be a copy, commented: «It is striking that the work said to be at Lisbon is dated 1607, the date of the works sent to the King of France, INFRA n. 9—10, and Spain, INFRA n. 11, which were merely copies of an existing translation».

3 SIR EDWARD MACLAGAN, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogol*, London 1932, cf. p. 218. MacLagan referring to the Persian works of Father Jeronimo Xavier, writes p. 215 «Father Xavier is credited with having made a translation of the Gospels in Persian. Father Maracci writing in 1649 states that, in addition to composing several books, *«he translated others, as the Gospels into the Parthian tongue»*. Father Freire writing from Goa in 1678 says that Aurengzeb had sent for *«the book of the Gospels which our Fathers have translated into Persian»*. The bibliographer Sommervogel ascribes to Father Xavier a translation of the Gospels dated 1607, which is said to be at Lisbon. And there is in the library of the Capuchin Fathers at Agra, a Persian translation of the Gospels which was transcribed about the year 1680, and which is believed by Father Hosten to be a copy of a translation by Xavier. On the other hand, no such translation is to be found in the list of his works in the note annexed to the Guide of Kings of the School of Oriental Studies, nor is it mentioned by Nieremberg, Alegambe or Alcazar, in their lists of the Works of Xavier».

4 ANGEL SANTOS HERNANDEZ S. J. *«Jerónimo Javier S. J. Apóstol del Gran Mogol y arzobispo electo de Cranganor, en la India»*. 1549—1617. Institución «Príncipe de Viana» 1958, p. 283.

5 ARNULF CAMPS O. F. M. *Jerome Xavier S. J. and the Muslims of the Mogul Empire. Controversial works and missionary activity.* Schöneck-Beckenried, Switzerland, 1957, p. 32.

Gospels was made by Father Xavier, but it is probable that a translation was made and it was largely based on one of the existing Persian versions. More recently, in 1961, Camps wrote: «Jerome Xavier sent several copies of the Gospels to Europe: two of them are still extant, one in the Casanatense Library and the other in the Gregorian University Library in Rome. These however, were not translations made by Xavier but copies of ancient translations already existing. There is no historical evidence for a fresh translation made by Xavier and we are only sure of an emendation of an already existing Persian version. As a matter of fact, Jerome Xavier presented Jahangir with an emended version in 1607».[6]

After having examined the oriental manuscripts in the Lisbon National Library in 1888, René Basset published in 1894 a list in accordance with the classification previously used in the collection, in which he indicated the existence of the two Persian manuscripts of the «Gospel according to St. Matthew» without giving any further details.[7]

In the light of this information, I have had the good fortune to find in the National Library two books in Persian — not of the Gospel according to St. Matthew — but of the Four Gospels. There is absolutely no doubt that the manuscripts to which Basset referred and those which I found were the same ones.[8]

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[6] ARNULF CAMPS O. F. M., *«Persian works of Jerome Xavier a Jesuit at the Mogul Court»*. Hyderabad-Deccan 1961, in *Islamic Culture,* Vol. XXXV n. 3, July 1961 pp. 166—176.

[7] RENE BASSET. *Notice Sommaire des manuscrits Orientaux de deux Bibliothèques de Lisbonne*, Lisbonne 1894, cf. p. 7; «Y-4-48 - Evangile selon S. Mathieu en Persan.» — «Y-4-49 - Evangile selon S. Mathieu en Persan.»

[8] In the General Catalogue of Manuscripts, under *Authors, Titles and Subjects*, under the caption *«Orientals»* there is a bundle of old handwritten index cards: *«Codices 7920 to 7980 Oriental, Arab, Persian, Turkish, Indian etc. manuscripts. Collection of 61 volumes. Donated by the Duke of Camposelice, by António de Carvalho (from Macau) and other sources»*. In this packet there are two Cards: Codex 7964 and Codex 7965, which it would appear were the old cards which Basset consulted. Codex 7964 reads: «Gospel of St. Matthew, copied in Persian characters, in two colours, gilt border on all pages. I vol. en fol. of 250 folios, binding of the XVII century (1608) 250 x 166 mm. offered by Father Manoel Pinheiro to the College of Evora. The Book of the Gospels, Persian translation by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus». Codex 7965 reads: «Gospel of St. Matthew. Copy in Persian characters, in black ink, filleted in blue and gold XVII Century (1607), 216 pages 258x164 mm. 1 vol. en fol. bound. Belonged to Fr. Manoel Pinheiro S. J. At the beginning, and before the text begins, it has a declaration by Jeronimo Xavier describing the origin and the wanderings of this manuscript. The note was written in December 1607, it bears the signature and seal of the Society of Jesus. A note on the margin says *«It is prohibited»*. Also in the General Catalogue, these same two codices are to be found on new cards, which are type-written as follows: Codex 7964 reads: «BIBLIA. N. T. Gospels. Book of the Gospels. XVII Century (1608) [250] f., 250x160 mm. 11 L. — Binding: Leather, XVII Cent. 257x165 mm. — Origin: Father Manoel Pinheiro, College of Evora. — Note: Book of the Gospels translated into Persian by Manoel Pinheiro S. J. with an explanation at the end about the preparation of this work, by Jeronimo Xavier S. J. Autographed signature of the two above-mentioned Jesuit fathers. Gold fillets on edge on all pages. Another copy of this same work in Cod. 7965. PINHEIRO, Manuel S. J. Trad. II Xavier Jeronimo S. J. B. N. L. COD 7964» — Codex 7965 reads: «BIBLIA. N. T. Gospels. Book of the Gospels. XVII Century (1607) [216] f. 258x164 mm. 11 L. — Binding: Tissue 265x 166 mm. — Origin: Father Manuel Pinheiro S. J. Old reference: Y-4-49. — Note: Book

The first manuscript contains a certificate by Jerónimo Xavier, written in Spanish, and is dated from Lahore on 21 December 1607, thus confirming the indication given by the Jesuit's bibliographers. However that is only a copy of an existing translation recorded to have been written «in the year of Our Lord eight hundred and twenty eight». Opening the book from right to left we find the first two folios which curiously enough are the only ones to be reduced to the size of the rectangular frame bordered with gold and blue fillets, within which Xavier's certificate is written. The next folio, in full format, is torn and bits of it are kept in an envelope that bears a hand-written indication to the effect that no other fragments were found. Nevertheless, we were able to verify that one side of the folio is blank and on the other, within a frame identical to the one containing Xavier's certificate, began the Persian text of the Gospels with the title in blue. On the left side of the upper part of the following folio there is a hand-written indication in Portuguese: «It is prohibited». At the end of the Persian text, which corresponds to the first folio, when opening the manuscript from right to left, there is a red seal with the following words: «COMPRA-RC 135 195». After verifying these indications, the Secretary informed me that the manuscript had been bought from «X» in May 1941. We assume that it had been stolen earlier and then subsequently sold, before being reacquired soon afterwards by its true owner.

There is every reason to believe that the manuscript is the copy which until now had not been located, that Jerónimo Xavier had intended to offer to Henry IV, King of France. In two letters from Lahore bearing the same date,[9] as the certificate inserted in this book, Xavier advised his

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of the Gospels. Translated into Persian by Manuel Pinheiro S. J. with an explanation at the end about the preparation of this work by Jeronimo Xavier S. J. Autographed signature of the two above mentioned Jesuit Fathers. Gold and blue fillets. Incomplete text. There is another copy of this same work. COD. 7.964. I, PINHEIRO, Manuel S. J. Trad. II, Xavier, Jerónimo S. J., B. N. L. COD. 7965 - Reg. 135.197». — While the two Codices are now correctly described as Book of the Gospels it is to be noted that its translation in Persian is wrongly attributed to Manuel Pinheiro S. J. The latter was born in 1552 in Ponta Delgada in the island of São Miguel in the Azores. He entered the Society in Lisbon at the São Roque House in March 1573. He went to India in 1591 and accompanied Jeronimo Xavier to the Great Moghul mission. He was sent twice to Goa, in 1607 and 1610 by the Emperor Jahangir, after staying a few more years he then returned to the Profess House of Goa where he died in 1618. Cf. A. FRANCO S. J. *Ano Santo da Companhia de Jesus em Portugal, Porto 1931,* pp. 494—495. According to SANTOS, *op. c.*, p. 109 n. 45 to 47 there is a great confusion in the Catalogues of the Province about the dates of his birth, as well as of his entrance in the Society and of his departure to India. We are also told that Pinheiro knew so well Persian that he stared the Moghuls. He had among his Jesuit companions the nickname of «the Moghul». Cf. *INFRA* n. 76, Father António Botelho's relation translated in English by H. HOSTEN, p. 152. In a new filing cabinet recently installed, under the heading *«Oriental Codex»*, the same two manuscripts are described in type: the first one as follows: «Persian - Cod. 7964. Bible N. T. Gospels. Book of the Gospels. XVII Century (1608) [250] f. 250x160 mm» and the second one «Persian - Cod. 7965. Bible N. T. Gospels. Book of the Gospels. XVII Century (1607) [216] f. 258x164 mm».

[9] ARCHIVUM HISTORICUM SOCIETATIS JESU, Roma (A. H. S. I.) *Goa 46-1* fls. 69—69v letter written in Spanish by Jerónimo Xavier to General Acquaviva in Rome, dated Lahore 21st December 1607. Reproduced by SANTOS, *op. c.*, p. 282: «Last year when we heard the good tidings that the King of France so much favoured the Society

Superior General Acquaviva in Rome of his desire to send the transcript to the King of France, and enclosed the tribute to His Majesty.[10] In the Archives of the Society in Rome there is no indication whether or not the Father General complied with this request, nor any record of the safe delivery of the book, the whereabouts of which have been unknown. Yet, in consideration of the fact that the certificate and letters written by Xavier bear identical dates and the transcript in the Lisbon National Library seems to have a makeshift binding of green cloth board, rather worn in appearance, permit us to identify it as the reproduction which was to have been offered to King Henry. At all events we know that this copy included in the parcel destined for Rome and eventual relay to France did not reach Lisbon until the Summer of 1610. Since in the interim, Henry's assassination (by Ravaillac) took place on the 14th of May, it is understandable that the Jesuit authorities in Portugal could have considered it sensible to retain it.[11]

The second manuscript which is in the National Library in Lisbon, is another copy of the aforementioned original, and contains an identical certificate by Xavier, although the date is 1608 (one year later again on 21st December). The certificate and several notes, which do not appear on the first one, are written in Portuguese. On opening the book from left to

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in his kingdoms, we wished to send him a transcription of the book of the Holy Gospels, that we sent to Your Paternity by Father Francisco Vieira, and so now in compliance with that desire we now send you a transcription of the said book for the said King. We send it and the letter we write goes with it. If Your Paternity feels it should be sent, have it sent, and it would be good to have it bound there, for here it is not properly done; the transcription of the letter is the one that goes with this for Your Paternity to see and do with it what you deem best».

10 AHSI, *Goa 46*, 1 fls. 70—70v letter in Spanish from Xavier to Henry IV of France, dated Lahore, 21st December 1607. Reproduced by SANTOS, *op. c.*, pp. 282—283: «By the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ may He be with Your Majesty Amen. Through letters from our Fathers of the Society of Jesus each year we hear of the favours Your Majesty bestows on our religion in your Kingdoms, and as it is appropriate for the living members of a body by mutual communication to exchange our riches, so from here where we are we wish to share the benefits that we in these parts have received, and therefore we are compelled to thank you as if we ourselves had received them, and for your bounty we continue to pray the Lord Jesus to guard and help Your Majesty who thus guards and helps those of our Society». « . . . By chance an ancient book of the Holy Gospels in Persian came into our hands, and it seemed to us that a transcription of it would befit Your Majesty's library greatly, and so we send it in gratitude and thankfulness for all we owe You, and entreat You to receive this small service as a token of the ardent wish of the Fathers of this Society who reside in these kingdoms of the Mogor, that You may live long and happily for the benefit of so many kingdoms. May the Good Lord guard Your Majesty for many years».

11 Xavier also prepared another reproduction from the same ancient original, intended for Philip II, King of Spain. This copy, now at the Escurial Library near Madrid, contains an identical certificate also written in Spanish by Xavier, bearing the same date of the 21 December 1607 together with an indication that reads: «this came by the vessels that arrived from India to Portugal in this year 1610». Cf. CASIRI (M.), *Bibliotheca Arabico-Hispana Escurialensis sive Librorum Omnium MSS quos Arabice ab Autoribus Magnam Partem Arabo-Hispanis compositos Bibliotheca Coenobii Escurialensis Complectitur Recensio et Explanatio Opera et Studio Michaelis Casiri Syro-Maronitae*, 2 volumes Maitriti. 1760—1770. pp. 343—344, n. 1816. In the new catalogue of the Escurial Library the Ms bears the number 1821. On fol. 261v, there is the following declaration: *«This has been checked with the original»*.

right, on folio 5r we find a note duly authenticated by Manoel Pinheiro's signature, that says: «This Gospel in Persian is sent by Father Manoel Pinheiro for the library of the College of Evora and it is the Gospels». On the same folio, with the title in red, the Persian text of the Gospels begins within a frame filleted in gold, red and blue. Preceded by a note in Persian, signed by Xavier and bearing the seal of the Society, the text of the Gospels ends at folio 251r with a certificate that declares:

«I, Father Jerome Xavier of the Society of Jesus and Superior of the Fathers of the same Society residing at the court and kingdom of the great Moghul, certify that this book of the Gospels in Persian was transcribed from an ancient book of the Gospels in Persian which an Armenian *Padre* was bringing with him from Hierusalem to this part of the world in the year one thousand and five hundred and ninety eight and it is said that this same book was written in the year of our Lord eight hundred and twenty eight and its letter and composition bear witness to its antiquity. It reached our hands in the following manner. The said priest who carried that book on arriving from Hierusalem to Persia left from there in the company of Manucher who was coming as Ambassador from Shah Abbas King of Persia to King Jehadin Acbar Mogor in this city of Lahore. And as the said priest for some reason was unable to continue the journey with the said Ambassador he remained behind and came in another caravan and died on the way. Some Armenians travelling with him brought his books including the said one of the Gospels to this city of Lahore and delivered them to Father Manuel Pinheiro of the Society of Jesus who was living there on orders from the holy obedience. The latter Father in returning the deceased Father's books to Hierusalem kept this one of the Gospels and as stated a transcription was made without changing anything at all and it is faithfully reproduced. And in testimony of the truth of these assertions I wrote these lines myself and signed my name and sealed this with the seal of the Superior of the fathers of the society in these places / done in Lahore, court of King Nurdin Jahanguir Mogor on the 21 of December of the year 1608. Jeronimo Xavier». (Seal of the Superior of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus in Lahore)

In the preceding note in Persian, Xavier tells the same story with some variations. He refers to the bearer of the book as being «someone dear to our faith», without specifying whether he was an Armenian cleric and stresses that «the person bringing this book from Jerusalem reached Arak (central Iran) and there joined the retinue of Manucher, the ambassador of Shah Abbas».

Xavier concluded that Pinheiro had returned all the books to the Armenian Father's heirs «after having withdrawn from the collection this one book that he kept himself, so that all God's creatures could benefit from it as there is no other book like this one in the whole country».[12]

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[12] I am grateful to Professor Hagop Papazian of the Matenadaran, Institute of Ancient Manuscripts in Yerevan, who was kind enough to make a preliminary survey of the microfilm I sent him of the Persian translation of the Four Gospels from the Lisbon National Library. He made very interesting observations and gave a translation of the Persian colophon of Xavier, which rendered into English reads as follows: «I, Father

In the upper part of folio 250 recto, above the certificate written by Xavier, one can read the following entry in a different handwriting: «retained in the Librarian's cubicle as unique. Prohibetur 1650» and under this there is a further annotation: «These Gospels in the Persian language are prohibited according to Rule 4 of the Roman Index of forbidden books and to the observation made on it that it was in vulgar language».

It seems that this codex was part of a valuable collection of books, manuscripts, maps, prints and drawings that were offered to the Royal Public Library of Lisbon in 1797 — shortly after it was inaugurated — by D. Frey Manuel do Cenáculo Villas Boas, formerly Bishop of the Diocese of Beja and subsequently, Archbishop of Evora.[13]

It is therefore confirmed that both copies, now in the National Library of Lisbon, were neither originals nor copies of a translation by Xavier, but

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Jeronimo Xavier, member of the Shirani (?) Jesuit Congregation and Superior of the Fathers serving under the Emperor Nour-El-Din-Djehanguir, testify that this Gospel was copied from a book which someone dear to our Faith brought from the Holy City of Jerusalem to India in the year of our Lord 1598. As recorded in the book it was written in the year 828 of Our Lord. The old appearance of the book also suggests that it had been written in ancient times. This is a correct transcription and has been compared with the original. The story goes on as follows: when the person bringing this book from Jerusalem arrived in Arak (Central Iran), he there joined the retinue of Shah Abbas's ambassador Manouçhehri — who was going to present his credentials to Shah Djelel-Ed-Din Akbar — with whom he continues the journey (to India). The ambassador was in haste to pay his respects to His Highness Shah Akbar as soon as possible. So the man found himself unable to accompany him all the way. He remained behind and died on the way. Thereafter a few Armenians, who were his companions, brought that book together with other books to Lahore and handed it over to Father Manuel Pinheiro, who was at the time residing in that city under instructions from his superiors. The priest managed to deliver all the deceased man's books to his heirs after removing from the collection only this book, which he kept so that the creatures of the Lord might benefit from it, inasmuch as there was none like it in the entire country. This book was copied from that manuscript in utmost accuracy, and these few words were written and sealed in the year 1007 of Our Lord to confirm the truth». The date «1007 of Our Lord» seems to have been a transcription lapse of Xavier for 1607, because the year 1007 of the Hegira corresponds to our 1598 and the colophon was written at the time of Jahangir (1605—1628).

[13] B. N. L. Cod. 8549 *Miscelanea Histórica* (Copy by José Anastasio da Costa e Sá — 1824, 1 vol. in fls of 412 p.) fls 178—179 Letter from the Director Judge António Ribeiro dos Santos, Chief Librarian of the Royal Public Library, addressed to the Bishop of Beja. Lisbon 5th Dec. 1796, refers to the catalogues of the books from his rich library which the Prelate intends to offer to the Royal Public Library in that court: «The part that deals with Oriental literature, of which we have so little, especially drew my attention and filled all measure of my wishes». The Royal Public Library of the Court was established by a decree dated 29 February 1796 and Dr. R. dos Santos was appointed Librarian on 4 March 1796; cf. BNL, Fundo Geral, cod. 8748: *Apontamentos Históricos sobre bibliothecas Portuguesas colligidas e escripto pelo Conselheiro José Silvestre Ribeiro.* Fols. 188 to 190. Donation of books from the Selective Library on Numismatics and Rarities by the Rev. Bishop of Beja to the Royal Public Library of Lisbon, Beja 24 March 1797. — J. H. CUNHA RIVARA, *Catálogo dos manuscritos da Bibliotecа Pública Eborense, ordenado com as descripções e notas do Bibliotecário Joaquim Heliodoro da Cunha Rivara, e com outras próprias por Joaquim António de Sousa Telles de Matos*, Lisboa 1871, T. IV Theology, p. 5, n. (a): «Among the 217 manuscripts which Mr. (sic) Cenaculo gave to the Lisbon National Library we took note of a Bible in Parchment (of the XIIIth century) and the Gospels in the Persian language».

true transcriptions of an ancient book of the Gospels in Persian, written «in the year of Our Lord eight hundred and twenty eight».

The Library of the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon also possesses a Persian manuscript of the Four Gospels, albeit incomplete. From a note written in it by the Arabist João de Sousa, we learn that the missing folios, namely part of the Gospel according to Saint Luke and all the Chapters of St. John, were apparently used by a Lisbon confectioner for the wrapping of sweets and sugar ... This manuscript was transcribed from another original written by Sarkis Loudj ben Amir Maleik in the year 718/728 of the Hegira = 1318/1328 of Christ.[14] Though no certificate is found in it, on the first folio — at the verse of the beginning of the Gospel according to St. Matthew — there is an illumination in blue and gold, covering the full page, representing the insignia of the Society of Jesus and a handwritten annotation in Portuguese stating «this has been checked with the original». It leaves little doubt that it comes from the same source as two other copies made from the same original which are respectively at the Casanatense Library and at the Gregorian University Library in Rome. Therein both have a certificate signed by Jerónimo Xavier in Agra, under date of September 1605 mentioning that they are transcriptions made from an original written in «718 of the Hegira» which had «reached their hands miraculously». We are further told by MacLagan that in the said original — which unfortunately had disappeared some 60 years ago, there were some notes: one written in Spanish by Jerome Xavier in September 1605,

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14 Lisbon Academy of Sciences, *red manuscript* n. 623. João de Sousa wrote the following note in the Manuscript «Persian Manuscript. Contains the New Testament. Only the first two Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark are complete. In that of St. Luke, only the first 19 chapters, and part of the twentieth are complete, therefore all the others to the end are missing, and all those of the Gospel of St. John. And, as this manuscript was found in the shop of a confectioner, to whom it had been sold for the purpose of wrapping up sweets and sugar one can believe that the confectioner used some of the sheets that could not be found. Sousa. — Two eras are covered by this Manuscript, one from the year 718 of the Hegira = 1318 of Christ and the other from 728 of the Hegira = 1328 of Christ. And so we may conclude that it dates from the 1300 Century.» — At the end of St. Mark's Gospel, folio 51v, Sousa, omitting to reproduce the name therein mentioned of the scribe Sarkis Loudj ben Amir Maleik, annotated below «728 of the Hegira corresponds to 1318 of Christ». No doubt this was a lapse on his part as the date of its completion was the month of Shawwal 718 AH = 1318 as shown in the Leningrad similar Gospel (cf. *Infra* n. 106) and in the Casanatense one (cf: *Infra* n. 100). On folio 87v, at the end of the Gospel of St. Matthew, there is a colophon written in Persian with the date in Arabic. Sousa, who only knew well the last mentioned language wrote the date below, correctly this time: «728 Hegira 1328 of Christ». He did not, however, translate the Persian words asserting that «this Gospel of St. Matthew has been terminated by the hand of the most indignus of the people of the Great God, Sarkis Loudj ben Amir Maleik on the date 20th of the sacred month of Shawwal 728, feast-day of St. Bartholomew» (24th August). Born in Damascus, Father João de Sousa was the son of Christian catholic parents. He came to Lisbon in the year 1749, when he was 16 years old. He professed in the Convent of Our Lady of Jesus, of the Penitents' Order, at the time when Fr. Manuel de Cenaculo Vilas Boas was the Provincial. In this convent João de Sousa taught the Arabic language privately until the year 1795, when he became a permanent teacher officially. He was elected member of the Academy of Sciences on 6th of December 1780, and cooperated in translating several manuscripts, deciphering Arabian coins, etc. He died in Lisbon in 1812. Cf. JOAQUIM FIGANIER, *Fr. João de Sousa, Mestre e Interprete da Língua Arábica*. Coimbra 1949.

declared that the book was written in Persian in 760 AH (AD 1339) that it was brought by Pe. Nicholas, brother of the bishop of Jerusalem, that the Father died on the journey when near Lahore and that his books reached the hands of the Jesuits with great difficulty owing to the opposition of the Armenians.[15] The other note inserted therein by Manuel Pinheiro on the 7th August 1609 referred also that it had been brought by an Armenian «*Padre*» from Jerusalem for presentation to Akbar, but the «*Padre*» died on the way and the book had reached his hands.[16] It seems

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[15] MACLAGAN, *op. c.*, p. 214: This manuscript with other books and papers had reached the hands of William Marsden, who presented it in 1835 to King's College, being transferred in 1920 to the London School of Oriental and African Studies. When in 1932 MacLagan reproduced some of the Notes it contained, he did not do so after consulting the original which by then had disappeared from its ultimate depository, but he must have had at his disposal some data collected earlier. Cf. CAMPS, *op. c.*, pp. 27—28, n. 4. Therefore, not being able to verify the correctness of the date 760 AH printed by MacLagan, I was further perplexed by the fact that, with his faithful transcriptions of the same original, Xavier recorded that it had been written in 790 AH. However, as we shall see, both dates are wrong. The one given by MacLagan must be a typing misprint of the date 790 given by Xavier. While the latter had misread the date written in arabic: 718 AH.

[16] MACLAGAN, *op. c.*, p. 214. According to him, Pinheiro was believed to have been in Cambaya when he wrote his note which further declared: «It was originally intended that the book should be sent to Rome, but for certain reasons it seemed best to the Father Provincial that it should remain in the Secretariat of the Province (Goa) that afterwards such decision might be reached regarding it as should be best». I do not share MacLagan's belief that Pinheiro was in Cambaya on the 9th August 1609. MacLagan based himself on F. FERNÃO GUERREIRO, *Relaçam annual das cousas que fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus na India e Japão nos anos de 600 e 601 ... tiradas das cartas gerães que de la vierão.* Evora 1603, cf. ed. Coimbra 1930 T. III, Ch. VII. «About the Journey that Father Manuel Pinheiro made to Goa and from Goa to Cambaya for the benefit of the State of India», cf. pp. 20 to 25. In this chapter Guerreiro states that Pinheiro left Lahore with the ambassador of Jahangir on 13 September 1607 and reached Cambaya in April 1608. The ambassador did not then go to Goa, as the Count da Feira, the new Viceroy, had not yet arrived; Pinheiro was however summoned to Goa where «he spent most of the winter», returning to Cambaya for dealings with the ambassador, and suffering great hardships on this journey, «as it was out of season and in winter». On examining facts and dates carefully, we consider it more likely that Pinheiro was still in Goa on the 7th of August 1609, we can ascertain that as the appointed Viceroy D. João Forjaz Pereira, 5th Count da Feira, died on the way, the government of India was entrusted by his predecessor, Dom Frei Aleixo de Meneses, to André Furtado de Mendonça on the 27th May 1609. Soon after, the new Governor wrote to the ambassador in Cambaya that he was expecting his arrival, but when he heard that Akbar had given the English permission to establish a factory in Surat he wrote again telling him not to come, entrusting Pinheiro, «who was then in Goa», to carry this message. In the circumstances, it is clear that Pinheiro could only start on his return journey from Goa to Cambaya after 27 May 1609, most certainly on, or just after his note of 7 August 1609, and before the 5th September 1609, when Furtado de Mendonça handed over the government to the newly appointed Viceroy, Lourenço de Tavora, who wrote immediately afterwards to the ambassador asking him to come. The latter was unable to do so, having been sent for by Akbar, and «therefore the task he was to have carried out as ambassador was done by Father Manuel Pinheiro, who arrived in Goa with the fleet on the day of St. Catherine, 25 November 1609». It is clear therefore that in spite of the great hardships suffered on his land journey, Pinheiro must have reached Cambaya before the first days of November, in time to return again to Goa in place of the ambassador, on board the fleet sent by the Viceroy. In 1580 Acquaviva and his companions, Montserrate and Henriques, went from Goa to

therefore, contrary to what was believed to be the case, that not just one, but two books of the Four Gospels having belonged to the Armenian «Padre», finally remained in the hands of the Jesuit Fathers who made several transcriptions of these originals written on different dates and being, as we shall see, translations of two different versions.

Though others have already done so, but not with the same aim, I thought it worth while to make further investigation in contemporary sources, particularly the Jesuit Letters, to try and find out more about the two ancient books of the Four Gospels in Persian, one written in «828 of our Lord», the other in «718 of the Hegira» and their owner, the Armenian priest who died en route to Lahore.

The first reference to this subject is in the Relation of Father Fernão Guerreiro S. J. which reproduced a letter by Father Manoel Pinheiro, describing events occuring in Lahore during the years 1600—1601: «Some Armenians rendered obedience to the Roman Church, others abandoned their Mahometan and Gentile concubines, others married in the Church. All the Armenians who live in these lands are now more careful than before, for they understand that the Viceroy favours us in all we wish and because he will have justice expel from the city all those we indicate. It also helped that the Archbishop they were expecting should have died on his way, for by being prevented in Ormuz from proceeding (by sea) to India, he went around by Persia to Lahore and on this journey he died, deprived of divine and human protection, robbed of his books and all his belongings. The Armenians here believe that he was coming to be archbishop «da Serra», of the Christians of Saint Thomas in Malabar. The books have reached my hands, in spite of the Armenians who wished to present them to the King».[17]

Surat in twenty days «with great hardships and danger we have passed on this way». Cf. WICKI, *Documenta Indica*, Rome 1948—1975, cf. Vol. XII, pp. 45—46. The journey from Surat to Cambaya takes two days. On the other hand Xavier, Pinheiro and Goes went by boat from Goa to Cambaya. They left Goa on the 3rd December 1594 and reached their destination on December 24 (i. e. 21 days). TAVERNIER, *op. c. INFRA*, n. 23, cf., Part II, pp. 71—72, after indicating that it is possible to go from Surat to Goa either by sea or land route, adds: «But the way by land is very bad, generally travellers go by boat».

[17] FERNÃO GUERREIRO, *op. c.*, T. I. p. 19. Father PIERRE DU JARRIC S. J. Part III of «*Histoire des choses plus memorables advenues tant en Indes Orientales, que autres païs de la descouverte des Portugais. En l'établissement & progrez de la foy Chrestienne & Catholique: et principalement de ce que les Religieux de la Compagnie de Jesus y ont faict, & enduré pour la mesme fin, depuis l'an 1600 jusques à 1610. Bourdeaus 1614*». Du Jarric mentions Guerreiro as his main authority and therefore gave the same version that the Armenians from Lahore thought that this prelate was coming to India to be the Archbishop of Serra, that is, of the Christians of St. Thomas, in Malabar. An English translation of Book V, Part III, is given by C. H. PAYNE, *Akbar and the Jesuits. An Account of the Jesuit Missions to the Court of Akbar ... By Father Pierre du Jarric S. J.* Translated with introduction and notes. New York - London 1926, cf. Chapters IV—XV p. 135. However, PAYNE in his Note 5, pp. 264—265, expressed the opinion that «As the prelate who lost his life on this occasion appears to have been an Armenian Christian, he cannot have been destined to preside over the Syrian Christians of Malabar. Du Jarric seems to have mixed him up with another bishop who was held at Ormuz at this time, and who was actually on his way to Malabar, whither he had been despatched by the Patriarch of Babylon, but was turned back with his wife (and)

At this point we can see that neither Father Pinheiro, nor the Lahore Armenians, had any concrete information as to what had happened and were only able to surmise about the personality of the Armenian «Padre», and his motives in travelling to Lahore through Persia.

Taking these indications therefore as a starting point, as well as the data contained in Xavier's above mentioned certificates of 21 December 1607 and 1608, together with MacLagan's disclosure that the said priest was named Nicholas,[18] we shall now try to identify him and discover what happened.

After the final pacification of the Mazandaran province and its subsequent inclusion in the dominion of Persia during the autumn of 1597, Shah Abbas I spent the winter in Isfahan. On receiving this news he gave permission for the two ambassadors that Akbar had sent him to leave,[19] and appointed one of his Ichîk Aghasi (Steward of the Royal Household), namely Manûsher Beg, a Georgian Christian, to accompany them. As ambassador, Manûsher Beg was the bearer of a letter of friendship to Akbar in which Shah Abbas reported on recent events, and at the same time sought an alliance against their common enemy of Transoxiane, Abdullah Khan. With this letter the Shah also sent valuable presents: precious materials and one hundred Arab, Georgian and Bayati thoroughbred horses.[20] While the caravan was being assembled in Arak in Central Iran, the Armenian priest, who was en route from Jerusalem, joined the ambassador's retinue to accompany them to Lahore.

It would appear that the original intention of Manûsher was to take the maritime route, via Ormuz. His plan was frustrated, as can be seen in a letter dated Goa, 25 December 1599, from Dom Francisco da Gama, Viceroy of India, to Philip II. Towards the beginning of 1598 the ambassadors went to Ormuz with a caravan of over five thousand persons and requested the Captain of the Fort, Dom António de Lima, to ensure their embar-

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children and his followers». MACLAGAN basing himself on Guerreiro and Du Jarric, considers that the Armenian bishop was a Nestorian sent to the Christians of St. Thomas in the South of India; cf. *op. c.*, p. 256, «About the year 1597 the St. Thomas Christians wrote from the South of India to the Nestorian Patriarch in Mosul asking him to send them a new archbishop. The Portuguese authorities who, at this time, were earnestly striving to substitute the Nestorian Hierarchy among the Christians of St. Thomas, by the Roman one, ordered Ormuz to prevent the embarkation of this individual. In view of this, the prelate that had been appointed by the Patriarch tried to follow to Persia by land and then go on to India, but he died on the way before reaching Lahore. According to current use at the time, the Jesuits called the priest Armenian and say that at least part of his library reached the hands of Father Pinheiro in Lahore, much against the wish of the Armenians who wanted to offer it to the King». SANTOS says likewise, *op. c.*, pp. 280—281. On the denomination of Armenian given by Portuguese in respect of oriental Christians; cf. Father GEORG SCHURHAMMER S. J., *Armenian Bishops in Malabar* ? in *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Português — Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian*, Paris 1972 vol. IV pp. 141—148. — Also ROBERTO GULBENKIAN, *Jacome Abuna, An Armenian Bishop in Malabar* (1503 to 1550) in the same *Archives*, pp. 165—176.

18 MACLAGAN, *op. c.*, 214.

19 Lucien-Louis BELLAN, *Chah 'Abbas I, Sa Vie, son histoire*. Paris 1932, p. 69; Mirza Siya od Dîn Kâchi and Abû Nasr Khâfi, both of Iranian descent, emigrated in the Indies years ago, sent as ambassadors by the Emperor Akbar 1596—1597.

20 *Idem* p. 73.

kation to India. With the Viceroy's approval it was decided that if the ambassadors wished to sail from there with their own people and servants (as there was no accomodation for more) they could do so, but they were not to enter in any other way. Manûsher did not accept this reply and decided to take the land route.[21] This proved to be very arduous, but travelling diligently, towards the end of 1598 he arrived in Lahore, where he remained for the next four years.[22]

According to Xavier, the Armenian was unable to accompany the ambassador. He remained behind. Later he joined another caravan which reached the city of Lahore in the year 1600. He died on the way. Considering that Pinheiro, on referring to the same person, wrote that «having been prevented in Ormuz from proceeding to India, he went through Persia to Lahore and in that journey he died», it is quite possible that the Armenian cleric, not being in such a hurry to reach Lahore as the ambassador, and conscious of the dangers of the journey by land, decided to stay in Ormuz hoping that on his own he might have a better chance of reaching Surat, or Tatta, during the next sailing period — November 1598 to April 1599 — with the purpose of joining one of the merchant caravans that left from there regularly for Lahore.[23]

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[21] Cf. B.N. Lisboa, *Fundo Geral:* Ms n. 1976, fls. 120—121. Letter in Portuguese from Dom Francisco da Gama, Viceroy of India to Philip II, Goa, 24 of December 1599. «The cause of which Your Majesty orders me to advise Him why the caravans did not come the year 1596 in which Mathias de Albuquerque wrote to Your Majesty will necessitate to send for specific information of this at Ormuz, in my time it happened that there came one (caravan) and with it an ambassador from the Shah to the Mogor (Great Mogul) accompanied by another one the latter had sent him who were bringing with them over five thousand people and pretending that Dom António de Lima gave them embarkation; in the fortress of Ormuz on this matter a Council was done in which it was decided that should they (the ambassadors) wish, with their persons and servants (because there was no space for more) to embark there, they could do so but that otherwise they should not enter and I gave them approval to this resolution because following the tricks of these people, this was not a bad occasion to effect them and with this reply which they did not accept, they took the route by land passing through very rocky parts for fear of Abdullah Khan, King of the Uzbeques who had he not died at that same time none would have escaped him for the great discord which existed between him and Akbar for whom his demise (February 1598) was a great luck because he caused him great difficulties, the Shah had taken possession of the major part of his Kingdom, arriving to that part so near to Akbar that he made him withdraw from Lahore and they are not today so friendly as before because they are both opponents in this claim.» Mathias de Albuquerque handed over the Government of India on 25th of May 1597 to his successor Dom Francisco da Gama, who in turn was substituted by Aires Saldanha in 1600. Cf. *Tratado de todos os Vice-Reis e Governadores da India*, Lisboa 1962, pp. 131—132.

[22] GUERREIRO, *op. c.*, T. I. p. 305. In a letter written in 1602 Father Pinheiro adds that the ambassador was «a Georgian Christian and wore a cross on his arm but it was concealed and he dealt with the priests with great love, it was four years since he was in that kingdom and he was now returning to Persia filled with the desire and determination to convince the King of Persia to request for priests and build churches. While in Lahore, Father Manuel Pinheiro baptised two sons of Manutsher».

[23] J.B. TAVERNIER, *The six Voyages of John Baptist Tavernier, Baron of Eaubonne, through Turky and Persia and the East Indies for the space of forty years.* London 1678. Cf. Travels in India — Book I, pp. 15—16—43. According to Tavernier, to go from Isfahan to Agra there are only two routes to choose from: one by land, through Kandahar and Kaboul, taking 150 days. «But the merchants that are in haste, take

If this were the case, however, the Armenian prelate, no more fortunate, was confronted with strict instructions given in a letter dated from Lisbon on 28 February 1596, from King Philip II to the Viceroy of India, Dom Francisco da Gama «to observe the order given to the Captain of Ormuz and without scandal impede Venetians, Armenians and other foreigners from entering India».[24] The Venetians were, as a rule, strictly excluded from Portuguese Asia, being suspected primarily in the early years of the XVIth century of spying in Lisbon and encouraging the Turks to resist the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean.[25] It is possible that the Armenians were considered, on the one hand, very experienced and formidable competitors in the commerce of India; and, on the other hand, together with most oriental Christians, appeared as possible instigators of unrest among the Christians of Malabar. The Archbishop of Goa, Aleixo de Menezes, in a letter from Goa, dated 9 December 1597, states: «I have already warned Ormuz which is the channel these heretics take, that they are not to allow any Armenian or foreigner to come to these parts, without my permission. And I am certain that the Viceroy is doing likewise as I urged him to issue a decree to that effect».[26] A year later, Philip II wrote to the Viceroy of

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horses, three or four together and ride the whole journey in sixty or sixty five days at most». The second way: partly by land from Isfahan to Ormuz (about 40 days, cf. *Part one,* p. 244) and partly by sea, taking a ship in Ormuz to Surat, which takes fourteen to thirty days according to the month, during the 5 months and a half from November to April 15, of sailing and winds. From there by land to Surat to Agra it takes from 33 to 40 days.

[24] Boletim da Filmoteca Portuguesa (F. U. P.) n. 3 Lisboa 1955, *Livro das Monções* n. 4 (1595—1598) Doc. 12, p. 422.

[25] DONALD F. LACH, *India, in the eyes of Europe, the sixteenth century.* First Phoenix Edition, USA, 1968 cf. p. 468. *Carmelites in Persia*, London 1939 (thereafter *Carmelites*) p. 201. In a letter dated 3 June 1603 Friar Vincent O. C. D. mentions the Portuguese distrust of Italians and particularly Italian ecclesiastics, a distrust which went so far as to bar entry into Portuguese territories.

[26] *Seminário Conciliar de Braga*, codex n. 42, also in the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino de Lisboa, Fundo India.* Caixa 1 cf. SENNA FREITAS, *Memórias de Braga*, 1890, Vol. III, letter dated 9 December 1597 from Fr. Aleixo de Meneses, archbishop of Goa to Fr. Agostinho de Jesus (Castro) archbishop of Braga, published in full, pp. 13—22, cf. p. 19. António de GOUVEA, *Jornada do Arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Meneses, Primaz da India oriental, religioso da Ordem de S. Agostinho. Quando foy as Serras do Malavar, & lugares em que morão os antigos Christãos de S. Thomé, & os tirou de muytos erros y heregias em que estavão, & reduzio à Nossa Sancta Fé Catolica, & obediencia da Santa Igreja Romana, da qual passava mil annos que estavão apartados.* Coimbra 1606. Livro 1, cap. IV. Gouvea mentions that as a result of the strict instructions sent to Ormuz by the Archbishop of Goa, Aleixo de Meneses, that no ecclesiastic from Chaldea, Persia, or Armenia, be allowed to pass through India without special permission: «a Bishop calling himself Bishop of Serra, who was coming from Ormuz accompanied by a priest who was his son, and others with him to attend his succession to Archbishop Abraham, were all turned back and in all the other ports of India the Archbishop ordered a check of all Armenians and Chaldeans who came in ships from whatever place were sent back for there was much suspicion from previous experience that some of the priests came dressed as sailors and caused unrest among Christians, and even the Bishops disguised themselves to be able to enter and with these rigorous measures they came no more, and it was the only way to put an end to the errors of this Christianity, for so devoted are these Christians to this Christianity and to the customs and rites of Babylon in which they were brought up and so desirous of having a Prelate that always came . . . » As early as 1557, there is a reference to one of the

India to express his satisfaction for the latter having instructed Dom António de Lima — when taking command of the fortress of Ormuz — of not letting enter to the State of India, Venetians, Armenians and other foreigners as he himself had ordered.[27]

For the record, some years later in 1609, this decision was slackened as the King gave orders to the Viceroy of India, Rui Lourenço de Távora, that «if he came to the conclusion that it is prejudicial to the welfare of the State to give execution to the decision which prohibited the entry to Persia of Portuguese, Moorish, Gentiles and Jewish merchants and the passage to India via Ormuz of Armenians, Venetians and Jews not to process it».[28] It was however, not easy make the distinction between them because it was not unusual for merchants and travellers of various nationalities, European missionaries or Chaldean religious, and others, to wear Armenian dress to travel without too much trouble in hostile countries, whereas some Armenians were wearing Turkish or Persian dress and speaking these idioms whenever opportune.

Already one of the «extravagant Laws» by command of Dom Sebastian, on 24 of August 1563 ordered that «from now on, being found some persons in the city of Lisbon or in any place of my Kingdoms which in their dresses, idioms and customs seem to be Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, Persians or other nations which are subject to the Turks be arrested until verification of their identity and the reason of their visit and business they came to deal with and for how long».[29]

Faced by this insurmountable difficulty, apparently Nicholas had no alternative other than taking the land route to Lahore, which meant re-

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bishops who came to Cochin disguised as a poor Armenian, António SILVA REGO, *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente,* (thereafter *Padroado*) Lisboa, Vol. VI, p. 248. Letter from Fernando da Paz to the King, Cranganor, 10th January 1557. COUTO, *op. c. INFRA,* n. 37, cf: Dec. XII last part ch. IV, p. 992 tells us that «Mar Abraham entered in Malabar dressed as a sailor». — In 1559 Father Belchior wrote to the General of the Society in Rome suggesting that His Highness «gives the order, more particularly to show great vigilance, not to permit any Bishop Armenian or Chaldean, to come to India, via Persia». Cf. SILVA REGO, *Padroado,* vol. VII, p. 241 letter from India dated 15th January 1559. However, it seems that these orders were not strictly enforced and in 1583 Father Valignano wrote from Goa to Father Claudio Acquaviva in Rome suggesting to try to obtain that King Philip II give orders «to the Captains of Ormuz not to permit any Chaldean to enter India because it is via Ormuz that is known they come to India and as soon as they arrive, they make themselves bishops». Cf. WICKI, Vol. XIII, p. 430, letter in Spanish, dated 13th December1583.

[27] CUNHA RIVARA, *Archivo Português Oriental,* (thereafter A. P. O.), Fasc. 3,2. P. Nova Goa 1861, p. 919: Letter dated 21st November 1598.

[28] F. U. P. *idem* n. 3, p. 595, Letter from the King to the Viceroy of India, Rui Lourenço de Tavora, Lisboa, 11th March 1609.

[29] *Leis Extravagantes collegidas e Relatadas pelo Licenciado Duarte Nunez do Lião per mandado do muito alto e muito poderoso Rei Dom Sebastião Nosso Senhor,* Coimbra 1796, pp. 553—554: «Law n. V. That do not enter Armenians, Arabs, nor Persians in the Kingdom». «By a decree of 14 August 1563 f. 241 of Book 4». Also, at the National Library of Lisbon, *Reservado* 90[32] A, printed on one page with the same date «Law that do not come Armenians, Greeks, nor Persians». Though the title is different, the text refers in both cases to «Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, Persians and other people of nations or countries subject to the Turk».

turning first to Persia and there joining one of the caravans that went twice yearly to this city, via Kandahar and Kaboul. These premises tempt us to identify him with Brother Nicholas, an Armenian friar of the Order of Saint Gregory of Jerusalem, who was seen in Ormuz in February 1599 by the Portuguese Dominican, Emanuel dos Santos.[30] From there he travelled to Isfahan with two Portuguese clerics who had just arrived from Goa by land. These were, Friar Nicolau de Melo, of the Order of St. Augustine, and Afonso Cordeiro, a Franciscan layman for whom he acted as interpreter in the Persian language. Friar Nicolau de Melo was received with full honours by the Shah Abbas I, and the Armenian priest, acting as interpreter, may have been present at the audience when the King of Persia asked, «what is the reason why the Moghul and the Turk have priests in their lands while they are the enemies of the Christians, whereas I, who am so fond of them, have none».[31] This audience is at the origin of the establishment of the first official mission of the Portuguese Fathers of the Order of Saint Augustine to Persia in 1602.

While Nicolau de Melo and Afonso Cordeiro left Isfahan incorporated in the embassy of Anthony Sherley[32] and Hussein Beg, sent by the King of Persia to the Pope and the Christian Princes at the end of April 1599, the Armenian Friar Nicholas was still in that city in July of the same year, according to a report from Francisco Costa, an ex-jesuit native of Goa, and had arrived to Isfahan that same month.[33]

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30 The Portuguese Dominican, Emanuel dos Santos, who in February 1599 was travelling via Ormuz, from Goa to Isfahan, where he arrived in June of the same year, also referred to him in the same way. Cf. Ms. Arch. Vaticano, *Fondo Borghese,* series II, vol. 20, fol. 125; Germani fratis Octavii Abbioso, episcopi Pistoriensis, Ex relatione Petri Antonii Abbioso de Fre Emmanuele de Sanctis, O. P. Portugallensis 26 Janiero 1601: «Said the aforementioned Friar that with the Persian was also an Armenian Friar of St. Gregory of Jerusalem called Friar Nicholas, who had come from Ormuz with another Friar of St. Augustin, named Fra Nicholas (de Melo) that had gone with the English Ambassador (D. Antonio) . . .» quoted by ARNULF HARTMANN O. S. A., *Father Nicholas Melo and Brother Nicholas of St. Augustin, Martyrs O. E. S. A.* Louvain 1959 p. 20, n. 76, and by CARLOS ALONSO O. S. A., *Clemente VIII y la Fundación de las misiones católicas en Persia,* published in *«La Ciudad de Dios»*, Vol. LXXI, pp. 196—240, cf. pp. 198—199 n. 4. To avoid any confusion with the Armenian «Padre» Nicholas we are in the text calling Melo by his Portuguese name Nicolau.

31 ANTONIO DE GOUVEA, *Relaçam em que se tratam as guerras* . . . Lisboa 1611, cf. fls. 4v. and 5r.

32 HARTMANN, *op. c.*, p. 16. Anthony Sherley also mentions the visit he received in Isfahan from a Portuguese Friar called «Alphonso Córdero, and another Armenian Friar from Jerusalem who brought a message from Nicholas di Meto». In the course of this journey Anthony Sherley denounced Father de Melo to the Prince of Muscovy who had him arrested and imprisioned for many years until he was burned alive in Astrakan in the year 1615. On the tragic fate of Nicolau de Melo, see the precious study of Father Arnulf Hartmann, *supra* n. 30.

33 Furthermore, a former Portuguese Jesuit from Goa, one Francisco da Costa, who left Ormuz in May 1599 and arrived in Isfahan on July 12th, said that he had met there an Armenian Father ot the Order of St. Gregory who had come from Ormuz two or three months before in the company of two monks, one from the Order of St. Augustin, and the other from that of St. Francis, both on their way to Portugal. This Armenian brother Nicholas was — perhaps abusively — implicated in a slanderous campaign which Francisco da Costa raised against Nicolau de Melo in Rome. The assertions that Fran-

From that date we have no further information about the movements of the Armenian Friar. It is quite probable that, before the end of 1599, he may have joined a caravan of Armenian and other merchants that left Isfahan regularly for Lahore, and thus set out on his way to his ultimate destination.[34]

Therefore, it seems rather intriguing to find that this Armenian Friar, of the Order of Saint Gregory, coming from Jerusalem and travelling to Ormuz and Persia, bore the name of Nicholas and knew the Persian language exactly as the Armenian «Padre» Nicholas, described by Pinheiro and Xavier. Considering that the Portuguese word «Padre» was originally only applied to Roman priests,[35] the fact that Xavier denominated him as such, and qualified him as «someone dear to our faith», would seem to confirm that the latter was just as obedient to the Roman Church as the Armenian Friar bearing the same name, who belonged to the Order of St.

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cisco da Costa claimed to have been uttered by the accused were never confirmed, and if the clerics of the Order of St. Augustin, who had the greatest interest in contacting the Armenian priest in Persia and in India to verify his alleged testimony, attempted to find him, there is no indication that this was ever achieved. Cf. a) Informatione di Francisco da Costa Sacerdote Portughese venuto dall'India all Santitá de Nostro Signore intorno all'Ambasciate del Persiano. b) Informatione di Francisco da Costa Sacerdote Portughese venuto dall'India all Santitá di Nostro Signore intorno a Fr. Nicoló Agostiniano. MS General Archives of Simancas, *Seccion Estado*, K. 1630, fol. 69—70. HARTMANN published the two manuscripts, cf. *op. c.*, pp. 56—64. On the same subject see also ALONSO, *op. c.*, pp. 202—207. — In the Lisbon National Library, *Fundo Geral* n. 1976, fls. 144—145, there is a copy of an undated letter (probably December 1599) written from Goa by Francisco da Gama, Viceroy of India, to Philip II of Spain, in which Nicolau de Melo is alluded to and requesting that he should be arrested on arrival in Spain: «A Friar of the Order of St. Augustin named Nicollao de Mello arrived from the Phillipines to this city and asked me permission to go to Spain therefore I consented more at the Archbishop's instigation (Aleixo de Meneses) than because I deemed it convenient, after he departed I heard he was a very unreliable person, but I was not in time to prevent his journey, and he went to the court of the Shah and from there he wrote to me during this monsoon telling me how he had met there two Englishmen (Anthony and Robert Sherley) ... If the friar reaches there (Spain) Your Majesty should order that he be detained, and privately investigated for everything that happened to these people both at the court of the Shah and on the way for there are indications that he meddled in things that were none of his concern and that he spoke in a careless manner and acted in a scandalous way to the Moors and a lay-brother of the Order of St. Francis (António Cordeiro) who was in his company can be a good witness of everything, it is not convenient that Father Nicolau returns here because persons of his kind are very dangerous in these parts».

[34] Each year at least two caravans left Isfahan on their way to Kandahar and the Indies. Cf. *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autre lieux de l'Orient,* Amsterdam 1735, vol. II, p. 298, where he indicates that «le 15 Décembre, la Caravane de Candahar qui va d'Isfahan aux Indes par terre, étant prête de partir fut retardée à cause des vols qui se faisaient de tous côtés, jusqu'à la vue d'Isfahan». CHARDIN speaks also of the caravan that in the Spring goes to the Indies, *op. c.*, vol. IV, p. 283.

[35] François BERNIER, *Travels in the Mogul Empire AD 1656—1668, a revised and improved edition*, by Archibald Constable — New Delhi, 1972 cf. p. 323, in note 1 Constable says that «Padre» is now the name given all over India to priests, clergymen, or ministers of all denominations, and is sometimes applied by natives to their own priests. But Padre Sahib, or Lord Padre Sahib is now the Indian name for a Christian Bishop.

Gregory Lussavoritch (The Illuminator), which since 1583 was associated with the Dominican Order.[36]

We shall now consider the motives that may have induced Nicholas to bring with him the ancient books of the Four Gospels, written in the Persian language, and the reason why the Lahore Armenians wished to offer them to Akbar in the year 1600.

It is a fact that Akbar was not the first Moghul Monarch to show a special interest in the teachings of the Christian Law. Certainly his father King Humayon, and his grandfather Baibur, had done so, as revealed by Diogo do Couto in the second part of the Fifth Decade of Asia.[37] Over a

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[36] M. V. Van OUDENRIJN, «*The Monastery of Aparan*», in *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum I*, Roma 1930, pp. 265—308, cf. p. 267. The «Frates Unitores», or brothers of the Congregation of St. Gregory Lussavoritch (Illuminator) had the same rules and the same habit as the Dominicans, following the rules of St. Augustin, cf. Jean MECERIAN S. J., «*Histoire et Institutions de l'Eglise Arménienne*». Beyrouth, 1965, pp. 297—298. Leonce ALICHAN, *Sissakan* (in Armenian) Venezzia 1893, p. 393. According to Chevalier RICAUT, *Histoire de l'Eglise Grecque et de l'Eglise Arménienne*, Amsterdam 1710, pp. 416—417, the Armenians of Surp Lussavoritz (or St. Gregory) usually wear a black garment and a hood of the same colour. But when they say Mass, they dress in white and wear a crown on their heads. The priests of Surp Parsiach, or St. Basil, dress themselves in the fashion of Greek monks, and those of Surp Dominicos, or St. Dominic, wear the same habit as the first mentioned, but they differ in the shape and the cut of the hood». CHARDIN, *op. c.*, p. 21—27, speaking about the non-catholic Armenian clergy states that it has «monks of the Order of St. Basil only: and have none of another order».

[37] DIOGO DO COUTO, *DA ASIA, Dos Feitos que os Portugueses fizeram na conquista, e descubrimentos das terras, e mares do Oriente, Decada Quinta, Parte Segunda,* Lisboa 1780; cf. new edition Lisboa 1974 vol. 13, pp. 260—262. In this book Diogo Couto refers to the 1540—1550 Decade and tells of a Portuguese called Cosmo Correa who was married in Chaul, and who went to Houmayon's court and with whom he became friendly and «one day when he was practising with him he asked to be shown the book he prayed from and it was fetched being the Hours of Our Lady, an ancient in quarto-size, all illuminated; and when the King opened the book he saw at the beginning the seven Psalms, where the story of David and Bethsheba was described, illuminated and very large occupying all the quarto. And as the King looked at it he said to Cosmo Correa: «What will you give me if I guess this story? Cosmo Correa replied what had he that he could offer to such a Monarch. Give me your lance said the Mogor (it was one brought from Portugal) if not I will give you the head of a wild boar that I will kill in front of you; and saying this he told the story just as we habe it in the Scriptures». And returning him the book he said: «Show me the four men who wrote the Law of the Christians». Cosmo Correa showed him the Evangelists (which were) illuminated at the beginning of the Passion and the King looked slowly; and then he said: «Now you must known something that I often heard my father Babur Pasha tell, and that is if the Law of Mafamede suffers detriment, that I was to receive none other but the one that had been written by four men». And thus was this barbarian so affectionate towards the Christians (principally the Portuguese) and wherever he saw them he honoured and favoured them greatly». — It is interesting to mention here the opinion of the Persians on the Christian Religion in general and the Gospel in particular, as reported by CHARDIN, *op. c.*, vol. II, p. 231 «Pour ce qui est de l'Evangile, qu'ils nomment Ingil, ce qui est le même nom ils tiennent, comme je l'ai observé ci dessus, que Jesus Christ l'ayant reçu de l'Ange Gabriel, le donna à lire à ses Apôtres & à ses Disciples; mais qu'il les remporta avec lui lorsqu'il remonta au Ciel, parce que les hommes prenaient de travers la sainte Doctrine qu'il contenait. Cependant que comme ce livre était presque tout entier dans la mémoire des Apôtres, quelques uns d'eux se mirent à écrire chacun ce qu'il en avait retenu, pour servir à l'instruction des Peuples; et c'est là l'Evangile que

period of 25 years Akbar showed commendable tenacity in his efforts to get hold of the Gospels in a language that would enable him to gather the information he so ardently wanted. Having heard that in Sâtgâon, a port in Bengal on the river Hooghly,[38] there lived a priest called Gil Eanes

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les Chrétiens ont; qui n'est point, disent-ils, l'Evangile que Jesus apporta du Ciel, mais un Récit historique des dits et faits de ce grand Prophète, recueillis par ses Apôtres lequel a été depuis altéré en plusieurs manières par ses premiers sectateurs. Pour preuve de cela, ils disent qu'ils ne faut pas comparer l'Evangile avec les autres livres Sacrés; car dans ces Livres-là c'est toujours Dieu qui parle, et non le Prophète; au lieu que l'Evangile est une Histoire de ce que Jesus fit, et de ce qu'il dit en chaque lieu ou il alla. Ils ajoutent que le vrai Evangile commençait par ces mots: O prophète! J'envoye mon Ange pour te preparer le chemin. Rêverie forgée sur les premières paroles de l'Evangile selon S. Marc». *Idem* pp. 269—270 tells us also that as regards the Life of Jesus Christ, the Persian Legends «contiennent non seulement ce que s'en trouve dans les Evangiles, mais encore tous les contes qu'il y a dans les Lègendes des Chrétiens Orientaux et notamment dans une Lègende Arménienne intitulée l'Evangile Enfant, qui n'est qu'un tissu des Miracles fabuleux; comme entre autres, ... Qu'étant envoyé à l'Ecole pour apprendre l'A. B. C. le Maître lui voulant faire dire *a*, il s'arreta et dit au Maître: Apprenez-moi auparavant pourquoi la première lettre de l'alphabet est ainsi faite? Sur quoi le Maître le traitant de petit babillard, il répondit: Je ne dirai point *a*, que vous me disiez pourquoi la première lettre est ainsi faite. Le Maître se mettant en colère Jesus lui dit: Je vous l'apprenderai donc, moi. La première lettre de l'Alphabet, est formée de trois lignes perpendiculaire sur une ligne diamètrale (l'A Arménien ա est ainsi fait, a peu près comme une m renversée) pour nous apprendre que le commencement de toutes choses est une Essence en trois Personnes». — *Sinodo Diocesano* ... Coimbra 1606 — cf. fol. 12—13 Action III, Decree XIV excommunicating any one daring hence forward have in his hands, transcribe, read or listen reading to others the following books: the Book called «Infancy of the Saviour» or history of Our Lady already condemned by ancient Saints for having in it many blasphemies and heresies, and many fabulous histories without foundation.

[38] Sâtgâon (Satâgao - Sategão - Satigam) also referred as «Porto Pequeno» of Bengal, cf. WICKI, Vol. XI, p. 649 n. 45, is located on the left bank of the river Hooghly, about 45 Kms. north of Calcutta. In his letter of 5th June 1579 Eanes Pereira calls it «bandel de Satagão», cf. *Idem* p. 595. According to Mesrob SETH, *Armenians in India*, Calcutta 1937, cf. p. 36, the Portuguese, after their arrival in India, founded a settlement at Bandel on the banks of the river Hooghly in Bengal, while the Dutch established a Factory in Chinsurah, a suburb two miles to the South of the city of Hooghly which had acquired some renown in connection with the Roman Catholic Church at Bandel, a small village near Hooghly. This Church of Our Lady of the Happy Voyage is considered the oldest in Bengal, it was built by the Portuguese Augustinian Friars in 1599, was destroyed in 1632 by order of the Mogul Emperor, Shah Jehan, and rebuilt in 1640 by Joam Gomes de Soto. However, Eanes Pereira who was the vicar of the bandel of Satgâon mentions in 1579 that «the Church of Satagaon is without priests», which would indicate the existence of an earlier place of worship, cf. WICKI, Vol. XI, p. 595. 28 Armenian tombstones are found inside this church at Bandel, cf. SETH, *op. c.*, p. 307. The second oldest christian Church in Bengal is the Armenian Church constructed at Chinsurah by the Margar family who settled there with other Armenian traders in 1645. In 1695 Khoja Johannes, the son of Khojah Margar laid the foundation stone of the Church which was completed by his brother Joseph in 1697 and dedicated to St. John the Baptist, in memory of his brother Johannes who died suddenly on 27th November 1697 and even today one may read the long inscription in classical Armenian verse on his grave, followed by four lines in Portuguese as follow: AQUI JAZ JOAO — MARCOS AR — MENIO DA NAS — SAO ANO 1697 — which can be translated as «Here lies João Marcos of Armenian nationality year 1697». Margar has been misspelled for Marcos which is also an Armenian name, cf. SETH *op. c.*, p. 304—305. — For a complete account of the Roman Catholic Church and convent at Bandel cf. HOSTEN S. J., *Journal of the Calcutta Historical Society* — January - March 1915 *A week at the*

Pereira, Akbar had him brought to his court in Fatehpur, because not only the Portuguese that were with him, but also the Moors that came from this port, spoke very highly of this cleric. After a perilous journey — not of his own volition — of about 450 leagues, lasting forty days, Eanes Pereira arrived in Fatehpur on the 8th of March 1578, and with him came a friend of his, a native of Cochin and «one named João Garcês, an Armenian who was married in Sâtgâon», but the latter went also against his will to serve as interpreter, although he knew the Persian better than the Portuguese language.[39]

A few days later, Akbar asked Eanes Pereira to «teach him to speak and read Portuguese as he very much wanted to read the holy gospels».[40]

The wonderful and holy things that Eanes Pereira told Akbar were taken from the «Comentarios sobre el Catechismo Christiano», published in Amberes in 1558, by the Archbishop of Toledo, Bartolomé de Carranza of the Preachers Order.[41]

Eanes Pereira also had with him the «Vita Christi, the size of a missal», possibly published in Lisbon in 1561, authored by another Preacher, Luís de Granada.[42] Eanes Pereira, who was a secular priest, as a novice received a religious education in Portugal, in the convent of St. Dominic in Elvas. He remained there several months, but had to give up his profession due to ill health.[43] Eanes Pereira therefore had a dominican formation — albeit incomplete — but while in India he always declared love and affection for the Society of Jesus.[44]

Bandel Convent, Hugli». — In the third settlement at Chandernagor on the river Hooghly, established in 1688 by the French, there is in the Roman Catholic Church the tombstone of an Armenian priest bearing the Portuguese name of Padre João Armenio who died at Chensurah on the 1st February 1779. At his burial was also another Armenian Father called Abraham de São Lourenço. They both belonged to the «Armenian Monastic Order of St. Anthony known as the Antonians». Father Abraham died in Calcutta on 20th September 1782 and was buried inside the Murghihatta Roman Catholic Cathedral, but his grave cannot be traced now. Cf. SETH, *op. c.*, p. 316—317. The Armenian order of Antonians (in Latin Antonius) was established at the beginning of the XVIIIth century. They went over to the Schism towards the end of the 19th century. Part of them returned to unite with Rome, but their Institute is now extinguished. Cf. *Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Cultura,* vol. II, Lisboa 1964, cls. 612—614.

39 WICKI, Vol. XI, pp. 593—598, letter from Father Gil Eanes Pereira to D. Henrique de Távora O. P. Archbishop of Goa. Fatehpur Sîkrî, 5th of June 1597 cf. p. 595.

40 *Idem* p. 596: Eanes Pereira started to teach him and the first words he taught Akbar were «*'in the name of Jesus Christ'* and walking around his courtyeard he went on repeating it during a few days without ever becoming tired. And whenever he saw me or some of the other Portuguese who were here, he at once came towards me saying *'in the name of Jesus Christ, in the name of Jesus Christ'* to which I replied *'May he be with you'*.»

41 *Idem* p. 597 and n. 28.

42 *Idem* p. 424 and n. 7 letter from Gil Eanes Pereira to D. Henrique de Távora, Sâtgâon in Bengal, December 1578 or January 1579.

43 WICKI, Vol. XII, p. 13 letter from Father Montserrate S. J. to the Provincial of the Society in Goa, written on 29th April 1580 from the Court of Akbar.

44 Later, in February 1584, when he was in Cochin as a Vicar of the Bishop of that Province, Eanes Pereira wrote that «neither in these parts of India nor in any other was there a more faithful friend of the Society than himself», which is the reason — so he says — why he had been elected «Conservator» of the Society of the Province of Cochin. Cf. WICKI, Vol. XIII p. 509. It is clear, however, that Eanes Pereira did not

After a sojourn of eight to nine months at the Court of the Great Moghul, Eanes Pereira, who insisted on saying that «he was not a man of letters or anything», kept suggesting to Akbar that he would benefit more from conversations with Fathers better learned on Scripture than he was.

Finally, Akbar decided o write to India to the Viceroy in India, D. Luis de Ataide (1578—1581), to the Archbishop of Goa Dom Henrique de Távora O. P. (1578—1581) and to the Provincial of the Jesuits, Father Rui Vicente, asking them to send him some of the «Fathers of St. Paul» — as the Jesuits in Goa were sometimes called — and at least one with them that could speak Persian.[45]

In a royal letter dated December 1578, addressed to the Fathers of the Order of St. Paul in Goa,[46] Akbar wrote «I am sending there Ebadulla (Abdullah) and Domingos Pires to ask that you send with them two learned priests and that they bring with them the principal books of the law and Gospels so that I learn it and its perfection because I wish to learn it and keep it in my heart; I entreat you that they should come with the same ambassadors as soon as they arrive and together bring the books of the Law».[47]

The result of this mission was that three priests were appointed, namely Rodolfo Acquaviva, António de Monserrate and Francisco Henriques «who knows the Persian language because he was born in Persia».[48] Together with the ambassador and Domingos Pires they arrived at the court of Akbar on the 28th of February 1580. Soon after that, Father Francisco Henriques added in a letter that Domingos Pires «is the tongue of His Majesty who came with us from India and he is of the Armenian nation».[49]

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belong to the Society and in fact the Jesuits never claimed that he had. In 1580 the Provincial of the Society in Goa calls him a «Portuguese secular priest». Cf. WICKI, Vol. XII, p. 108. However, for the history of the mission to Akbar this was a little embarrassing to the Jesuits. It led Father Montserrate, when writing his *«Relaçam do Equebar rei dos mogores»*, dated 26th November 1582, to show that before Eanes Pereira, other Portuguese, including two Fathers of the Society: António Vaz and Pedro Dias — who were in Bengal in 1576 — had been instrumental in arousing Akbar's interest to be «informed of our things». Cf. WICKI, Vol. XII p. 660. *Idem* Vol. XIII, p. 509: Letter from Canon Eanes Pereira to Father Claudio Acquaviva in Rome, dated Cochin 15th February 1584. «And while it is true having as I have, love for the Society, I do not see whom I could call who might be better equipped for such a great enterprise, as was the one in my hands, as the said Fathers of the Society».

[45] WICKI, Vol. XI, p. 598 and Vol. XIII, p. 511.

[46] WICKI, Vol. XII, p. 609. The Provincial of the Jesuits in Goa, in a letter dated 21st October 1582 states: «Saint Paul is our Patron that is why they call us Fathers of Saint Paul». — TAVERNIER, *op. c.*, Part II, p. 7: «The Jesuits at Goa are known by the name of Paulists, because their church is dedicated to St. Paul».

[47] WICKI, Vol. XI pp. 428—429.

[48] *Idem* pp. 837—845, letter from Mateus Ricci S. J. to Father Emanuel de Góis, Cochin, 18th January 1580, cf. p. 481. P. Francisco Henriques was a Persian Moslem born in Ormuz. He entered the Goa Diocese in 1556, cf. WICKI, Vol. XII, p. 295 and Vol. XIII p. 609.

[49] WICKI, Vol. XII, p. 14 cf. Letter from Father Francisco Anrriquez (Henriques) to Father Lourenço Peres, written between 28th February and 29th April 1580. In it, Henriques added that in talks between the cleric and Akbar, he, the Priest, replied in Persian «and in what he did not understand Domingo Pires helped». In a previous letter of 6th April 1580 to the same Father Lourenço Peres, *idem* p. 7, Henriques

In Fatehpur the three Jesuits and the Armenian Domingos Pires met the secular priest Eanes Pereira,[50] who had been at the court for a year and a half, and possibly also his interpreter, the Armenian João Garcês, before they both returned to Bengal, whence Eanes Pereira later went to Cochin. The three Jesuit Fathers presented the King with a Bible in four languages (Hebrew, Chaldean, Greek and Latin) in seven volumes, very well bound and gilded, and printed in Antwerp in the years 1567–1572, by Christopher Plantyn, under the patronage of Philip II of Spain. Akbar took each volume separately and touched his head with it reverently. He asked which one was that of the Gospel and when they showed him it, he treated it with more reverence than the others.[51]

In a letter written from Fatehpur (Sîkrî) on July 20th 1580, Acquaviva informed the Provincial in Goa that Akbar had often asked them to translate the Gospel into Persian, and because the Jesuits thought this would be very fruitful they had been writing for him sometimes one thing and sometimes another from the Gospel. Simultaneously Acquaviva also requested the Father Superior to write to Portugal begging that «they send us the Gospel in Arabic that will be of much service to Our Lord».[52]

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wrote: «Domingo Pirez is good for disputes, as he can help me in some things albeit few: for as he does not understand Portuguese well I am not very much helped by him». Akbar had a certain regard for his interpreter Domingos Pires, «even inviting himself» to his wedding on 24th September 1582 in the chapel of the Jesuits in Lahore. Pires ordered «a banquet in the Portuguese manner» in his honour, served in the priests' house which was attended by the king's three sons and some of his more important Moslem captains». Cf. letter from Father Rodolfo Acquaviva to Father Rui Vincente, provincial of the Society of Jesus in India, (Fatehpur), 27th September 1582. António da SILVA REGO, *Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa* (thereafter D.U.C.) III Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, Lisbon 1963 — *Jesuit Missions, India Codex in the British Museum,* Mss. *Add.* 9854 p. 4.

50 In the annals for the Province of Portugal for the year 1579, dated Goa, 26th October 1579, Father Montserrate refers to the motive of the Moghul mission and to Father Gil Eanes Pereira, without mentioning his name as follows: «It seems that what decided this king to ask the Fathers of the Society was the fact that in a mission two of them had accomplished three years ago (1576) in Bengal, which also belongs to him, those two priests refused to hear the confession of those who had stolen the royal wealth. On being informed of this the king marvelled at the purity and justness of Evangelic Law, which demands that justice be enforced even towards those who ignore it or live out of it. And so strong was his desire to know the law that he seeks to be informed of it and for that he sent to Bengal for a vicar, who was a secular priest of goodly life, but not a man of culture, and to achieve his wish he wrote to the archbishop begging him to ask the Provincial to send him the fathers whom he had already requested before this secular priest's arrival».

51 WICKI, Vol. XII, pp. 15 and 16, letter «from all three, (Acquaviva, Montserrate and Henriques) to the Captain of Damão, from Fatehpur / a martio usque ad / ad 29 April 1580». The said Bible, the second Polyglot sponsored by Philip II of Spain, printed in Antwerp in the years 1569—1572 had 8 volumes, the eighth being the lexicum. The New Testament in volume 5 was published in Greek, Latin and Syriac, while the first Polyglot, the «complutensis» Bible printed earlier with the benevolent help of Cardinal Ximenes (a Franciscan) in the University of Alcalá de Henares (Complutum) — where Jerónimo Xavier had studied — contained the New Testament which first came out in 1514 only in Greek and Latin; the Old Testament in Hebrew, Latin, Greek and Chaldean, was finished in 1517. Cf. *Encyclopedia Britanica,* 11th edition, vol. 22 col. 25.

52 WICKI, vol. XII p. 57.

By 1582, Akbar decided to send an ambassador to the King of Spain and with him Father Monserrate, who was to take letters for the Pope and the Father General in Rome.[53] In a letter to Philip II, Akbar included this message: «It has reached my fortunate ears that the heavenly books such as the Pentateuch, Psalms and Gospels are put into Arabic and Persian. Should a translation of these, or any other Books which might be of general benefit be procurable in your Country, let them be sent», written in the Month of Rabbi al «avul 990» — namely March/April 1582.[54]

The embassy never left Goa, the official version being that this year there was only one ship to Portugal and as it was already overloaded, it seemed to the Viceroy, Dom Francisco Mascarenhas, that the ambassadors could not go and that therefore they had to stay in Goa with Father Monserrate.[55] Under the circumstances it is most doubtful whether the letter was sent; in any case there is neither an indication that it reached its destination, nor that the King of Spain ever replied to it.

For his part, Eanes Pereira writing from Cochin on 15th February 1584, informed the General of the Society in Rome that he was returning to Sâtgâon, in Bengal, as Vicar and Visitor of the said Port. From there he would write to Akbar and should the latter call him and show willingness to proceed further with his intentions, he would immediately send for the Fathers of the Society to come to court.[56] Apparently this turned out to be another frustrated attempt.

Akbar decided not to wait any longer and he commissioned the court historian Abu'l Fazl, who was said to have knowledge of the Pentateuch and the Gospels, to translate the Gospel into Persian.[57] Nevertheless, it is

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[53] *Idem* p. 583, Letter from Father Rudolf Acquaviva to the Superior in Rome, Father Claudio Acquaviva, Fatehpur (Sîkrî) 25th of April 1582. Cf. also MACLAGAN, *op. c.*, pp. 46—47.

[54] Complete English text in JAMES FRASER, *The History of Nadir Shah*, 1792. (Reprint 1973) pp. 12—18, cf. p. 17.

[55] WICKI, Vol. XIII, pp. 625—626, letter from Rui Vicente to Claudio Acquaviva, dated Goa. 21 October 1582: The true reason was that both the Viceroy Dom Francisco Mascarenhas and the Provincial of the Society, had doubts as to the sincerity of Akbar's good intentions, the more so that at the same time (March 1582) Damão was being besieged and he was doing other things against the State of India. Therefore, both the Viceroy and the Provincial, dissimulating in everything related to the subject of the embassy, wrote to Father Rodolfo Acquaviva at the court of Akbar, that if someone of the Society had to go to Portugal, it had to be himself. When Rodolfo Acquaviva informed Akbar of the above, he refused to give him permission to depart, and added that «if the ambassadors were not going he did not mind».

[56] WICKI, Vol. XIII, pp. 505—514. Letter from Canon Gil Eanes Pereira to Father Claudio Acquaviva, dated Cochin, 15 February 1584 cf. p. 513.

[57] W. J. FISCHEL, «*The Bible in Persian Translation*», in «*The Harvard Theological Review*», 45, Cambridge Massachussets 1952 *op. c.*, p. 19 n. 53 ABÛ'L - FAZL 'ALLÂMI *The Ain-i Akbari*. Translated into English by E. Blochmann — Second Edition, Delhi 1965 pp. 191—192 «Learned monks also came from Europe who go by the name of Padre . . . These monks brought the gospel, and mentioned to the emperor their proofs for the Trinity. His Majesty believed in the truth of the Christian religion, and wishing to spread the doctrines of Jesus ordered Prince Murâd to take a few lessons in Christianity by way of auspiciousness, and charged Abû-l Fazl to translate the Gospel». It is not known from what language, or version, Akbar wanted the books translated into Persian.

not certain whether Abu'l Fazl carried out this task, but for sure Akbar continued his search for the Gospels in Persian.

During the 35th year of Akbar's reign (1590—1591) a Greek sub-deacon Leon Grimon, a man of much prestige and good sense, arrived at his court: Abu'l Fazl, undoubtedly refers to him when mentioning the arrival of «Father Farmaliun»[58] with whom «came a number of Europeans and Armenians who brought silks of China and goods of other countries that were deemed worthy of His Majesty's inspection».[59] Well impressed by his visitor, Akbar decided to send Leon Grimon as his ambassador to Goa, at the beginning of 1591, carrying letters and presents, to ask for some priests of the Society.[60] The Father Provincial appointed Fathers Duarte Leitão and Cristobal de Vega, together with Estevão Ribeiro an assistant brother, to proceed to the Emperor's Court where they arrived in the year 1591. They were well received. Akbar immediately ordered that a school be established in which priests could teach children of leading gentlemen and captains of his court and his own children as well, the princes, and one of his nephews, to read and write Portuguese.[61] After remaining some time at Akbar's court, they returned to Goa without having achieved anything worthy of mention, or without convincing the Emperor to accept the Law of Christ.[62]

In the year 1594 Akbar insisted for the third time that he wanted some priests to be sent to his court, and for this purpose he wrote to the Viceroy of India by safe hand of an Armenian,[63] (probably Domingos Pires) who

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[58] MACLAGAN, «*Jesuit missions to the Emperor Akbar*», in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 1896, p. 42 n. 4, is of the opinion that «Farmalium» or «Farabatum» may be a corruption of Duarte Leitão, or possibly of Grimaleon. However, Leon Grimon, the Greek sacerdote, seems to correspond to «Father Farmalium», (Fra Leon) according to Abu'l Fazl's description of the latter «a man of much learning and eloquence. A few intelligent young man were placed under him for instruction so that provision might be made for securing translation of Greek books and for extending knowledge». — SANTOS, *op. c.*, p. 106 notes 33—36, based on Juvencio's Latin text refers to «the armenian Grimon». Also probably from the same source BARON HENRION, *Histoire Générale des Missions Catholiques* 1847. Second Book, cf. XXI, p. 161 refers to an Armenian Deacon called Grimon. However, there seems to be no doubt that Grimon was Greek. SANTOS, *op. c.*, p. 178 says that Grimon «mastered the Persian, Greek and Turkish languages and was a man of business». Leon Grimon is the same «deacon named Leon» who, together with Demetrio, another Greek merchant and Isaac an Armenian from Lahore, accompanied Brother Bento de Goes in his mission of discovery to Cathay in 1603. However, Leon and Demetrio abandoned Bento de Goes on the way to Hircande. Cf. GUERREIRO *op. c.*, T. III, pp. 25—27.

[59] H. M. ELLIOT and J. DAWSON, *The History of India,* reprint Allahabad 1972 Vol. VI p. 85. *The Akbar nāmā* of ABU-L FAZL, translated from Persian by H. BEVERIDGE, reprint Delhi 1977, pp. 873—874.

[60] LUIS DE GUZMAN S. J., *Historia de las misiones que han hecho los Religiosos de la Compañia de Jesus para predicar el Santo Evangelio en la India Oriental en los Reynos de China y Japon*, Alcalá 1601. Cf. ed. Bilbao 1891, pp. 147—148.

[61] GUZMAN, *op. c.*, p. 148.

[62] *Idem, ibidem.*

[63] CUNHA RIVARA, A. P. O. *Fasc.* 3, 2nd *part* p. 589 letter written by the King of Portugal from Lisbon, on January 28th 1596, to the Count Admiral, Viceroy of India, referring to a letter received from the former Viceroy Mathias d'Albuquerque, states the following: . . . «He also tells me (in his letter) that Akbar had written some letters and among those one which he had sent by an Armenian Christian, who had given him

travelled with an ambassador. His request was granted and for this new mission Fathers Jerónimo Xavier, Manuel Pinheiro and brother Bento de Goes were appointed. They left Goa on the 3rd of December 1594, accompanied by the ambassador and the Armenian interpreter Domingos Pires, who years before had taken part in Father Rudolfo Acquaviva's expedition. They finally arrived at Lahore on 5th of May 1595 in a caravan formed in Cambaya that included Armenian merchants.[64] The following day they were received by Akbar and offered a house where they started taking daily lessons in Persian from a Moslem teacher. As soon as they were established, the Jesuits opened a school where the sons of captains and nobles were taught to read Portuguese.[65] Later on, they were summoned by Akbar, who showed them two very precious pictures, one of Christ and the other of the Virgin, that he had received from Father Pedro Martinez, Bishop of Japan, when he was Father Provincial of India.

Akbar then sent for the books, particularly the Royal Bible, which Acquaviva and his companions had brought from India in 1580. He again asked the Jesuits to endeavour to learn the Persian language as he wished to deal with them without interpreters.[66] In a letter dated 8th September 1596, Xavier states that Akbar returned the Royal Bible which was from then on displayed in the Lahore chapel.[67] The latter may well have felt that

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suitable information about our power and prosperity: furthermore that the said Akbar wanted some men of letters to be sent to him and complained of the quick departure of the Jesuits despatched to him by Manuel de Sousa Coutinho, when he was Governor, and that he (Albuquerque) had considered the matter with some prelates and monks, who were of the opinion that two learned monks should be sent, and that the Provincial of the Society of Jesus offered his own ecclesiastics with the same zeal for the service of God and for mine with which he had given the two others, as well as a very learned layman, and I recommend you to thank the said Provincial on my behalf, as well as those of his order which he has given me to go to Ethiopia, and that you should favour these things and keep me always informed about them». English text from MACLAGAN, *Jesuit mission to Akbar, op. c.*, pp. 108—109.

64 MACLAGAN, *op. c.*, p. 68 gives extracts of a letter dated Lahore 3rd September 1595 from Father Pinheiro to «P. Joannem Alvaretz Assistentem» describing the journey to Lahore: «... On March 19th 1595 the party left Ahmadabad, reaching Pattan on the 24th which was Easter Eve according to the Gregorian calendar. The Fathers had great difficulty in persuading the Armenians in the caravan to celebrate Easter on the following day, but ultimately they all agreed «ex mero timore quia redeundum illis erat per terram nostram vel quia cesserant veritati» except one stubborn old «doctore» who celebrated his own Easter by himself later on ... they were all glad when on May 5th 1595 they entered Lahore». GUZMAN, *op. c.*, p. 150 gives the date of arrival as «15th of May 1595».

65 A. SILVA REGO, D. U. C. Vol. III, p. 95. In his letter from Lahore of 4 August 1607 Xavier wrote that on Sunday mornings at the Mass, the Fathers preached in Persian and Portuguese on the Gospel of the day, while in the afternoon they preached and instructed the women and the youths on the Catechism in Hindustani. CAMPS, *op. c.*, p. 184 referring to that letter stated that up to 1611 the Portuguese language was used by the Fathers of the mission for the instruction of the men-folk on the Catechism, «because the indigenous people — in imitation of the Moslems, who considered the Arabic tongue as their sacred language — thought Portuguese to be the sacred language of the Christians». Thereafter the Catechism was taught in Hindustani.

66 GUZMAN, *op. c.*, p. 151.

67 CAMPS, *op. c.*, p. 186. Cf. Letter from Xavier dated 8 September 1596, AHSI, *Goa* 46, I fol. 33 and 30v. It seems more probable that only the fifth volume that contained the four Gospels was exposed in the chapel and it was possibly for that particular purpose

the Bible in seven volumes was not worth while keeping, as it was written in Hebrew, Chaldean, Greek and Latin, four languages Akbar was unable to understand, but also to remind the Fathers of the imperative need to find and bring him the Four Gospels in Persian that he had persistently and unsuccessfully tried to obtain since 1578. Under these circumstances and considering that right from the beginning, the Armenian João Garcés, Gil Eanes Pereira's companion, and later on in 1582 and 1594, the other interpreter Domingo Pires, had obtained direct knowledge of Akbar's pressing desire, it is not unlikely that the Armenians living in the territory of the Great Mogul,[68] as well as the merchants and clerics of this nation, travelling by caravan from Lahore to Persia, Aleppo and Jerusalem, or to India and vice-versa, must have also been aware of his wishes, which were by then widespread. It is therefore not to be wondered at that an Armenian cleric travelling to Lahore was bringing with him copies of the Four Gospels in Persian, and that after his demise on the way, his Armenian companions who purloined his belongings, as they fully assessed the advantages they might derive therefrom, wished to offer them to Akbar.

Since his arrival in Lahore in May 1595, Xavier remained at Akbar's court practically all the time until the latter's death on the 17th October 1605. Especially after his return from the Deccan in May 1601, Xavier was continuously in Agra where Akbar had established Court, and this gave him the opportunity to dedicate most of his time to the creation of a Christian literature written in the Persian language.[69] Soon afterwards, Pinheiro came to Agra from Lahore, to where he returned in the Summer of 1602. During his stay in Agra, both Jesuits frequently visited the Emperor[70] and though Pinheiro must have brought to Agra the original written in 718 of the Hegira (1318 of the Christian era), most surprisingly they did not avail themselves of the circumstances to offer Akbar the Persian translation of the Four Gospels he so ardently desired.

However, Xavier offered him one of his works in 1602: «The Life of Christ», originally written in Portuguese and then translated into Persian with the collaboration of a famous man of letters of that period, called

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that the honourable Armenian Mirza Escander sent to the Jesuits' house in Agra «two thousand and five hundred rupees saying that we make a gold chalice from nine hundred and a rich gold binding for the book of the Holy Gospels from three hundred (rupees)» cf. SILVA REGO, D. U. C., Vol. III, p. 145: Letter from Father Jerónimo Xavier to the Father Provincial of the Society of Jesus in India (23 September 1613) pp. 143—152.

68 CAMPS, *op. c.*, p. 86: «Among the Eastern Christians the Armenians held the first place and they could be found in nearly all the towns of Mogul, India. They were an enterprising race, mainly engaged in trade, but also found in possession of land and of posts under the Government. There were also Greeks, Chaldeans, Syrians and Nestorians». E. R. HAMBYE S. J., *The Armenian Christians in India,* Appendix, pp. 302—305 in *Christianity in India. A History in Ecumenical Perspective*, Allepey, S. India, 1972 cf. p. 304 «The Jesuit mission of the Great Mogul (Lahore, Agra, Delhi) enjoyed many a time the financial help of the Armenians, their active religious sympathy, and their confidence».

69 CAMPS, *op. c.*, p. 6.

70 SANTOS, *op. c.*, p. 168.

Abdu-s-Sattar ibn Qasim, from Lahore.[71] It is only in the autumn of 1603 that we first hear that there are some books due to be sent to Rome, which may well be linked to the case under review.

In a letter written from Agra on 21 October 1603, Xavier states that: «the caravan which was to take some books and documents we are sending to our Father Superior has just departed».[72]

Subsequently, on the 6th September 1604, Xavier wrote from the same city, recording that the previous year «We had sent to Rome another book of the Gospels in Persian, the translation of which had been done more than three hundred years before. May it please God that it arrives».[73]

Would this be the manuscript kept in the Library of the Vatican, bearing the date of 9 Shawal (1011 of Hegira) 48th year of the reign of Akbar, namely 22nd March 1603?[74] If it is this copy, apparently transcribed in Agra for the benefit of the Armenian merchant Khodja Stepan, it took at least some 140 years to reach Rome, as it has various annotations in Armenian, the last one written in Isfahan in 1742.[75] It was indeed not unusual

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71 A merchant from Persia brought to Europe a manuscript of the «Life of Christ» which passed in the hands of Jacob Golius (Gool) in Leyden, and was used by the Dutch writer and Protestant critic and De Dieu edited it in Leyden in 1638 with a Latin translation and notes with the title: *Dastan-i-Masih Historia Christi Persice Conscripta simulque multis modis contaminata a P. Hieronymo Xavier, Soc. Jesu. Latine redita de animadversionibus notata a Ludivico de Dieu.* In 1660—1661, this Book was already placed in the Roman Index, cf. MacLagan *op. c.*, 246—247. Regarding Professor Golius, see F. MACLER, *Rapport sur une mission scientifique en Belgique, Hollande, Danemark et Suède*, (Juillet-Septembre 1922) Paris, 1924, pp. 487—488. It is noteworthy that in a letter Golius «conseille de s'adresser à un Armenien (Shàhin Kandi from Aleppo) qui vivait à Leyden pour obtenir une nouvelle traduction turque de la Bible, sur le texte de la traduction arabe usitée en Orient». In 1657 Golius put a request to the Curator of Leyden University to obtain a subsidy in favour of Shahin in order to remunerate him for the transcription of Manuscripts. In 1662 Shahin Kandi was still copying manuscripts. After the demise of Golius in 1667, Shahin and another person, named Petraeus, were entrusted with the task of preparing a list of manuscripts bequeathed by Warner to the University of Leyden. When Petraeus died, Shahin continued with this work. In the Warner Collection there exist three copies of the Four Gospels in Persian in the Library of the University. Cf. J. de GOEJE, *Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Academia Lugduno — Batavae —* 1873, Vol. V, pp. 90—91.

72 A. H. S. I., *Goa* 46, I fols. 56—57v. Letter of 21 October 1603, in Portuguese, from Xavier to Father Juan Alvares in Rome.

73 BRITISH MUSEUM, Mss. *Add.* 9854 — *Jesuit Missions in India* — 1582—1693. Letter in Portuguese from Jeronimo Xavier, Agra, 6 September 1604, reproduced in SILVA REGO, D. U. C. Vol. III, p. 21.

74 ROSSI, *Elenco dei Manoscritti persiani della Biblioteca Vaticana*, Vaticano 1948, p. 82, *Vat. Pers.* 56 — cm 21x13,5 ff. 220—13 lines — Indian Nastalik — leather binding, 4 Gospels in Persian; St. Matthew (ff. 1 v—61); St. Mark (ff. 62—100); St. Luke (ff. 10—167); St. John (ff. 168—216).

75 The colophon in Persian on folio 216 reads as follows: «The transcription of the manuscript Gospel prepared for Khodja Stepan was completed on Friday of the month of Shavval of the year 48». The 48th year of Akbar's reign corresponds to the year 1011 of the Hegira and to 22nd March 1603 of our era. The two lines in Armenian appearing on folio 56 should be read: «To try the pen and the beginning 22, servant Glatzkos (?) I wrote, amen, amen». Professor Papazian, who kindly made the above reading stated that if he has deciphered the word Glatzko correctly, then it should be presumed that the person trying the pen can either be an Armenian from Poland, or Gamenia, as he came across the name only in these countries (e. g. Azizko, Davko, Yevrko, Ivashko, Levko, Khatchko, Mikhalko ect.) In his opinion, it seems improbable, therefore, that

for oriental Christians to transcribe the Gospels themselves, for their personal use. Father Francisco Corsi, S. J. writing from Agra in 1619 states: «The Armenian Mirza Zulcarnem has such a devotion to the Holy Gospel that from his own hand he has transcribed it all in Persian and each day reads it».[76]

In his letter of 6th September 1604, Xavier wrote that at the beginning of March of the same year, an honourable Italian, named Giovanni Battista Vechietti, had arrived in Lahore.[77] He was a Florentine and knew the Persian language very well and read it correctly. Vechietti gave the priests a book of the Holy Gospels in Arabic with an interlinear Latin translation printed in 1591 in the Vatican.[78] The grateful Jesuits offered Vechietti the

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the scribe of a Persian Gospel copied in Agra, could have been a certain Polish Armenian. It is simply a trial of the pen, by a casual person on one of the free pages. Polish Armenian merchants had dealings in Persia at the beginning of the XVIIth century. In fact, in the spring of the year 1601, the Polish King Sigismund III Vasa sent the Armenian merchant Sefer Muratovicz from Warsaw to Persia, to procure the weaving of several carpets bearing the royal coat of arms. Muratovicz travelled through Moldavia to Turkey and after a difficult passage of the Black Sea, reached Trebizond on 31 May 1601. From there he went to Erzerum, Kars, and thence travelled through Christian lands of Georgia, to the towns of Erevan, Nakhitchevan and he crossed the river Arax near Julfa, when he proceeded through Tabriz and Kazvin to Kashan. W. E. F. ALLEN, *Russian Embassies to the Georgian Kings* (1589—1605) Cambridge 1970, 2 vols. Vol. I, p. 366.

[76] SILVA REGO, D. U. C. Vol. III, p. 155: Letter from Father Francisco Corsi to Father Jácome Medeiros, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in India (Agra, 28 October 1619). According to Father Botelho's account written before 1670 «Mirza was well read in our Gospels, the Psalms and Holy Scripture, which he had in Persian». Cf. British Museum *Add.* MMS 9855, fol. 41r—45v «*Rellação da Christandade que temos no Reino do Gram Mogol*»; HOSTEN, *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* Calcutta 1916, Vol. V, n. 4, pp. 149—170 published an English translation of the last portion of Father BOTELHO's *Relation*, cf. pp. 162—163. Father Botelho was a missionary in the Mogul empire during the years 1648—1654.

[77] Since 1598 Vechietti was contemplating a journey to India; after returning once more to Alexandria he went to Aleppo and thence, via Baghdad and Basrah, he continued till Ormuz, where he intended to take a vessel to India. Vechietti must have arrived at the island towards the end of 1598, hoping to obtain a passage in one of the boats that sailed to Surat, or Tatta in the Sind. It is not impossible that he should have met the Armenian priest Nicholas, who at that time was also trying to go to India by sea, and who was also collecting ancient manuscripts of the Bible in Persian. However, whilst Nicholas, overcome by difficulties that had arisen, left Ormuz in February 1599, together with two Portuguese priests, with the purpose of reaching Isfahan and from there go to India by land, Vechietti persisted in his intentions, though he was unable to satisfy the monetary demands of the Governor of the island. After waiting many weeks and when sailing time had passed, he went to Persia, as far as Chiraz, in the hope that on returning to Ormuz a new governor might have arrived who would allow him to leave by the first monsoon. However, time went by and though in fact there was a new Governor, it was only in September 1602 that Vechietti was ready to sail, but at the Governor's request he accepted the invitation to remain with him. It was only in the following year, in April 1603, that he finally left for Ormuz on a vessel bound for Tatta. All the details on Vechietti's travels have been extracted from «Lettera di Girolamo Vechietti A. N. M. Sopra la Vita di Giovanni Batista Vechietti suo Fratello», of the 26th March 1620, cf. pp. 167—170, published by J. MORELLI in «*I Codici manoscritti volgari della Libreria Naniana*», Venezia 1776, pp. 159—191.

[78] Roman princeps edition of the Four Gospels in Arabic, printed in 1590—1591, with its Latin version interlined, cf. J. N. SMITH's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. III (1893) p. 1615, col. I. Already in 1580, on the occasion of the first mission, Rodolfo Acquaviva

book of the Four Gospels in Persian that he «very much desired for Rome as it is said that there is only one book of the Gospels according to St. Matthew in Persian and they wanted the other three very much».[79]

This Gospel of St. Matthew written in 712 of the Hegira (1312–1313 AD) by Masud Ibn Ibrahim, was the first Persian manuscript to reach the Library of the Vatican in ca. 1574.[80] An Armenian from Aleppo called Toumayan, who was in Rome during the pontificate of Clement VIII, transcribed several copies of this manuscript, the first of which he finished in November 1598.[81]

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had written to Portugal from the court of Akbar asking for a copy of the Four Gospels in Arabic, cf. *supra* n. 52.

79 MORELLI, *op. c.*, p. 183: After Vechietti had been in Tunisia as a slave, for a few months during the year 1607 and 1608 he was ransomed and graciously given back by the Pacha of Tunis the Four Gospels which in the meanwhile had passed into the latter's hands. The present location of this copy, presumably of the 718 AH version, is not known. As regards his Judeo-Persian manuscripts, some were lost and bought back, such as the translation of the Pentateuch which was offered to the Vatican Library in 1741 by Pope Benedict XIV (cf. ROSSI *op. c.*, p. 87) or his copy of the Psalms now found at the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. Cf. BLOCHET, Catalogue des Manuscripts Persans de la *B. N. P.* Paris 1905, T. I. *Théologie Chrétienne,* p. I, n. 1.

80 ROSSI, *op. c.*, p. 29 *Vat. Pers.* 4, Ms containing 81 folios of 14 lines, written in Nashi. In folio 78 there is a colophon which gives the date Rajab 712 of the Hegira and the name of the scribe, Más'ud ibn Ibrahim. GIORGIO LEVI DELLA VIDA, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana.* Città del Vaticano 1939, cf. pp. 167—169. In folio 80 of the Gospel of St. Matthew there is a note written by Giov. Baptista Vechietti, dated from Rome 1598 in which he declared that he verified the contents of the manuscript and read its date. Toumayan the Armenian wrote his name in arabic, in white folio 79. According to Levi Della Vida — though he shows no definite evidence — *op. c.*, p. 187—190, it is not unlikely that the manuscript belonged to the library (mostly composed of Syriac books) which the Chaldean Bishop Mar Joseph took to India in 1556 where he was going to render spiritual assistance to the Malabar Christians. Later, Mar Joseph was sent to Rome by the Portuguese religious authorities of Goa, to be expurgated of the Nestorian heresies, but he died in 1569 during the voyage. It is to be accepted that his collection of books — some copied or annotated by him — became the property of the Vatican Library. In any case, at the beginning of 1581, the archbishop of Amid, Mar Elia Ormuz al-Asmar, delegate of the new Chaldean Patriarch, Simon Denha Gelu, wrote to the Cardinal of Saint Giulio Santoro, informing him that Mar Joseph had left books, personal effects and much money, and that his widow and children asked for their restitution to be able to pay off the debts he owed in his country.

81 ROSSI, *op. c.*, pp. 28—29, *Vat. Pers.* 3. This copy, transcribed by Toumayan (cf. fol. 60v) in the month of Rabi II of the year of Our Lord 1598, belonged to Leonardo Abel, Bishop of Sidoniensis and is now integrated in the Vatican Library. The same year Toumayan made another copy which was offered to J. B. Vechietti in Florence in 1609 by a certain Camillo Rinuccini; it is now in the National Library of Paris and contains a note by Vechietti: fol. 1r, cf. BLOCHET, *op. c.*, pp. 7—8, n. 10. There is also another copy made in Rome by Toumayan in the year 1601, which is in the Vatican in the *Barberiniani Oriental* collection: persiano n. 89 cf. ROSSI, *op. c.*, p. 158 and DELLA VIDA, *op. c.*, p. 216, n. 3. Toumayan also left a large folio with Armenian, Arab, (Nashi characters) Persian and Turkish (both in Tálik characters) and Latin calligraphies. At the end, just as he had done in the note written in St. Matthew's Gospel (*Vat. Pers. 4*) he wrote in Arabic «poor Tomaso Armeno Aleppino» and in Latin «Tomas de Angelis, Armenus». In the year 1600 he was a student at the College of Novices in Rome, and in 1601 there is a recommendation to Pope Clement VIII in favour of «Tomaso Armeno who knows many languages (etc.) Arabic, and Turkish and Persian». Cf. DELLA VIDA *op. c.*, pp. 216—217. The latter, *op. c.*, 216 considers that Toumayan may have

Xavier was extremely pleased to have a bilingual translation of the Four Gospels in Arabic and Latin, based on the text of the Vulgate, which could doubtless serve as a model. In his letter of September 6, 1604, when referring to the copy he had sent to Rome in 1603, he wrote: «Now we are making this same book of the Gospels in Persian with the corresponding Latin below, which if God be willing, will be of much esteem in Europe». However, time passed and the said work in Persian and Latin was not forthcoming, nor was there any news that Akbar had received the Gospels in Persian.

In September 1605, one month before Akbar died, Xavier sent from Agra to Goa the original of the Four Gospels in Persian written in the year 718 of the Hegira (1318 AD), as an offering to be taken to the Pope together with two transcriptions of it, for the Libraries of the Profess House and the Roman College respectively. As we will see later, however, the two copies only reached Rome in 1610, while the original did not go further than Goa.

It is sad that Akbar passed away in Agra in October 1605, without it appears having fulfilled his thirty year old desire to possess a Persian version of the Gospels. Since Xavier who could have materialised this Imperial wish, he must have been faced with an insuperable case of conscience for not doing so. This is, however, understandable. It appears evident that once Xavier became more fully acquainted with the text written in 718 of the Hegira, some doubts must have assailed his mind. Not only did he find some unexpected linguistic difficulties — apparently insurmountable — but certain disparities between the Persian text and the Arabic-Latin version of the Vulgate. All this forced the hard-working and very conscientious Jesuit to resign himself — at least as a temporary solution — to transcribe the original manuscript «as it was»; Xavier justified his decision in a note written in each of the two copies he transcribed in Agra in 1605 stating: «and even if there are some words in the Persian language that are in discord with those used nowadays we see no reason to change them as this would raise suspicious that some other things of more substance had also been changed».[82]

Therefore it seems to me that, having made these «discoveries», Xavier thought it more prudent not to place in the hands of the Emperor a text of the Four Gospels which when examined in Goa, Lisbon or Rome, might well be listed in the Roman Index. There is an indication, as we saw, that

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come from Aleppo with the Maltese bishop Leonardo Abel, who returned to Rome at the beginning of 1587, after a stay in the former city of just over three years.

[82] It is interesting to note here that Vechietti, on finding the same kind of difficulties in the transliteration of the Hebrew-Persian manuscripts of the Psalms, due to the numerous ancient and rare Persian words these contained «which today are little understood, taken from the oldest Persian poets, such as Firdusi, Azraqi and others» solved the problem in the same manner as Xavier. In this manuscript of the Psalms, which is in the National Library of Paris, there is a note from Vechietti stating that the transliteration was made «without addition or omission, without changing even one small word on our own initiative except in the matter of the Persian orthography, inasmuch as the Persian of the text was written in Hebrew characters and the orthography of one character (in Hebrew) did not entirely match the other (Persian)». Cf. FISHEL *op. c.*, p. 16 — BLOCHET *op. c.*, p. 1 n. 1.

it had indeed been the fate of the second Persian original written in the year «828 of our Lord» in compliance with Rule 4 of the said Index which prohibits the use of books of the Holy Scriptures in «vulgari lingua».[83] Under Rule II of the «Index Pro Regnis Lusitaniae» not only does Rule 4 of the Roman Index apply, but it is also specified that «only are permitted (the use) of small parts of the Holy Scriptures as are ordinarily Epistles, Gospels of the Mass, having a few selected parts of joint notations; and not the whole text of a book or an important part as would be a certain Psalm or an entire Chapter, though included among the said selected parts or notations».[84]

In this light we understand better why Father Acquaviva, in 1580, in response to the repeated request from Akbar to translate the Gospel into Persian, was only writing in that language one thing and another from the Gospel and why apparently the Jesuits were restricting the use of the Gospels and the Psalms they had, in the Persian language for the personal needs of the Missionaries.[85] After Akbar's death the Jesuits appeared

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83 *Index Auctorum Danatae Memoriae, Tumetiam Librorum* ... Lisboa 1624. This Edition of the Portuguese Index done by the Great Inquisitor D. Fernão Martin Mascarenhas, according to the compilation made by the Jesuit Father Balthazar Alvarez, contains also the Roman Index. — Pars Prima: Indicem Prohibitorum Romanus, p. 1—75. — In Indicem Librorum Prohibitorum confectum a deputatione Tridentinae Synodi — *Regula IIII*. «Cum experimento manifestum sit, si Sacra Biblia vulgari lingua, passim sine discrimine permittantur, plus inde ob hominum temeritatem, detrimenti, quam utilitatis oriri, hac in parte indicio Episcopi, aut Inquisitoris stetur, ut cum consilio Parochi, vel Confessarij, Bibliorum à catholicis auctoribus versorũ lectionem in vulgari lingua eis concedere possint, quos intelexerint ex huiusmodi lectione non damnum, sed fidei atque pietatis argumentum cape re posse; quam facultatem in scriptis habeant. — Qui autem absque tali facultate ea legere se habere praesumpserit, nisi prius Biblijs Ordinario redditis, peccatorum absolutionem percipere non possit. Bibliopolae veró, qui praedictam facultatẽm non habenti, Biblia idiomate vulgari conscripta venditterint, vel alio, quois modo cõcesserint, librorum pretium, in usus pios ab Episcopo convertendum, amittant; alijsq; poenis pro delicti qualitate, eiusdẽ Episcopi arbitrio subiaceant. Regulares veró, non nisi facultate à Praelatis suis habite, ea legere aut emere possint».

84 *Idem. Pars Secunda: Indicem Prohibitorum Lusitaniae* — pp. 77—194, p. 81. *Regras Geraes do Catalogo de Portugal acrescentadas as do Catalogo Universal Romano.* Regra II: (translated from Portuguese) «As to the version of the Holy Scripture written in common language, one will keep not only to the declaration that in the Roman Index comes under its fourth Rule, in which this matter is mentioned, but also that which has been again declared by the Holy Congregation and is found in the same Index lit. S in class 3. Holy Scripture, vel eius partes, ect. According to which declarations only small parts of the holy scripture in ordinary language are permitted, as usually are the Epistles of the Mass, with some comments or annotations appended: and not the whole text of a book or a notable part of it, as would be a Psalm or a complete chapter even if it were mixed with the said comments or annotations». P. 54 — *INDEX ROM. LIBR. S. 3 class.* «Sacra Scriptura, vel eius partes metro latino conscriptae, permitti possunt, dunc modo nihil côtra regulas Indicis contineant. Vulgari autem lingua pars notabilis, ut liber aut etiam caput permit nulla ratione poterit, sed modica, eaq, si statim commentario a quo illustretur». TERTIA CLASSIS «eos libros complectitur, qui sine scriptoris nomine exierunt in vulgus, e eam doctrinam continent, quam Romana Ecclesia tanquã catholicae fidei, aut morio integritati contrariã refutandã, ac repellẽ dâ esse decernit».

85 CAMPS, *op. c.*, pp. 184 and 194—195 «In 1607 he (Xavier) wrote that on Sundays and feast days the Fathers preached the Gospel in Persian and Portuguese and that they instructed the women in the Catechism in Hindustani. Up to 1611 the Portuguese language was used by the Fathers of the mission for the instruction of the men-folk in the

equally reticent to offer the new Emperor Jahangir an unamended copy of the Persian translation that was not authorized. In this connection Xavier must have been astonished on his arrival to Lahore 1606, to discover that Pinheiro had kept with him another ancient book of the Gospels written in Persian «in the year of the Lord eight hundred and twenty eight». Actually Xavier must have soon discovered that this second original was also not in harmony with the Vulgate, and the Persian text was particularly complicated. As can be verified from the copies made in 1607 and 1608, this book of the Gospels was also transcribed «and there are no changes anywhere and it has been faithfully compared». It was therefore not surprising that in a letter from Lahore on 25th September 1606,[86] Xavier explained that he had shown Jahangir the Gospel in Arabic, but that the Emperor would have liked to see them in Persian; some suggested that if Xavier were unable to do it himself, he must find outside assistance. This time Xavier had no other resort but to tell him that he had the Gospels in Persian and would bring them to him. He did not do so at once, however, and spent a few days reviewing the Persian.

But when Xavier finally brought the Gospels, Jahangir was no longer in the mood to resume business with the priest and consequently Xavier was able to «check and amend the Persian according to our Vulgate which in fact contained many mistakes by the scribes». It was only in April 1607, when Jahangir had left for the kingdom of Kabul, that the priests handed him «the Gospel written in Persian which he sometimes had asked for and he took it courteously and did not give it to anybody until he rose from the place where he was».[87]

Catechism, because the indigenous people — in imitation of the Muslims who considered the Arabic tongue as their sacred language — thought Portuguese to be the sacred language of the Christians». From that time Catechism was taught in Hindustani to all natives and Xavier gratified, wrote: «those with difficulties who in years learned the Pater Noster in our language learned already within few weeks all the Doctrine in their own and understood it and we experimented here also what the Society has so much experienced: how much useful it is to teach the Doctrine for the Community of people in the mother tongue». Cf. SILVA REGO, D. U. C. III p. 286.

86 *Idem*, p. 90, letter from Jerónimo Xavier to the Father Provincial in Goa in which Xavier explains that on the night when Jahangir was dealing with the matter of the ambassador whom he wished to send to Portugal «he spoke of other things, amongst them the one about the printing of the books and that this could be done in Persian characters. I said it is done in Arabic which is like it. Where he asks? I said here, do you want me to bring it? He says no, some other day. Then I told him just as one ear is identical to the other, so is our Gospel in Arabic to others etc. The next day we showed him then the Gospel printed in Arabic. He rejoiced much to see it in Persian. Some retorted, have somebody turn it into Persian, my Lord. I replied, I have it in Persian and will bring it to you. He was glad of this. He departed. After some days spent reviewing the Persian we took it to him one night. When being told we were there to bring him the book he had ordered, he replied that now was not the occasion and we were sorry that by now he was no longer willing to deal with this matter. We then undertook to revise and emend the Persian according to our Vulgate, that in fact contained many errors of the copyists and if we deliver it before the bearer of this departs we shall say how he received it etc».

87 *Idem*, p. 92: letter written by Xavier from Lahore, on 4 of August 1607, addressed to the Provincial in Goa.

It is elucidating that only Jahangir's insistence compelled Xavier to present him with the Gospels in Persian, not without having first compared and revised the Persian text according to the Vulgate and corrected small mistakes made by the scribes.[88]

Although no more is heard of the Four Gospels in Persian with the Latin below, Xavier himself continued his literary work in Persian, and in December 1607, he offered Jahangir a book written in that language depicting the lives of the Apostles.[89] In spite of failing eyesight, which compelled him to wear spectacles,[90] Xavier still worked as a copyist and his last known certified transcription of the book of the Gospels «written in the year 828 of Our Lord» bears the date Lahore, 21st December 1608.

This copy was sent to Goa and arrived just in time for Manuel Pinheiro to write in it that it was for the College of Evora before it was put on board of one of the ships which sailed in December 1609 and was brought to Portugal together with the other two copies, both equally certified by Xavier and dated Lahore, 21st December 1607, as offerings to the Kings of France and Spain, respectively. The copy intended for Philip II reached its destination in 1610 and is now deposited at the Library of the Escurial, the other for Henry IV of France does not seem to have travelled further than Portugal, as I have shown, and is now found in the National Library of Lisbon, together with the copy originally sent to the Jesuit College in Evora. By an extraordinary set of circumstances, the same fleet of December 1609 also transported to Portugal the two Manuscripts of the book of the Gospels written in «718 of the Hegira» which Xavier had wished to send to Rome in 1605, while the original intended for the Pope remained at the Secretariat of the Province in Goa.

Their odyssey deserves special mention: in September 1605 this original and the two transcriptions thereof, were sent from Agra to Goa to be taken

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88 We do not know which version was thus revised: the one written in 718 of the Hegira or the one copied in the year «828 of our Lord». We would be inclined however, to think that it was the former, which Xavier had already studied some years earlier, in relation to the Arab version of the Vulgate with a Latin translation. In his letter of September 24, 1607 to the Father General Claudio Acquaviva in Rome, he explained «I keep on revising and re-making and commenting the works which I have made in Persian, because in fact, Persian is easy only when one does not need to reach the style required for books . . .» Cf. AHSI *Goa* 46, I fol. 64v.

89 SILVA REGO, D. U. C. vol. III, p. 111: letter of 24 September 1608 written from Agra, to the Father Provincial in Goa. According to MacLagan *op. c.*, p. 251 «This was perhaps an incomplete or anticipated copy of it, because it only appeared in 1609. The copy in the School of Oriental Studies in London has an inscription in the handwriting of Father Xavier that says: Vida dos doze Apostolos do senhor Jesu — composta pelo Pe. Hero Xavier da Compa de Jesu — Em Agra, corte do grão Mogol Rey Jahangir ano 1609».

90 SILVA REGO, D. U. C. vol. III, p. 109. Letter from Xavier written in Lahore on the 4th of August 1607 to the Provincial in Goa «Apart from poor eyesight, my spectacles that were my eyes are broken and so with little health and less eyesight this goes really badly written». In a previous letter dated 25 September 1606, Xavier tells how Jahanguir had sent for him to read a letter written in Portuguese, but as he had no spectacles, the King sent for some and «after seeing that they matched my need he gave them to me in a box mended by his own hand», *idem* p. 63.

to Rome by the Procurator who was going there at the end of the year.[91] However, as a result of Akbar's death one month later, times became tumultuous, upsetting courier links with India and keeping Xavier completely in the dark as to the whereabouts of the three books. In September 1607, having heard that the vessel in which Father Francisco Vieira, the elected Procurator, had been travelling was shipwrecked, Xavier showed himself particularly preoccupied at the fate of the original presented to the Pope.[92]

Though we are not certain whether the three books arrived in time to be carried by Francisco Vieira when he left Goa on the 30th December 1605 on the ship «Nossa Senhora de Betancor», or whether they had reached the city after his departure, it is true that whichever happened would not make any difference, as the vessel returned to Goa in September 1606 after being wrecked on the island of São Lourenço and spending the winter in Mombasa.[93] It is a fact that a relic of the Holy Martyr Afonso Pacheco, also entrusted to Francisco Vieira, found its way back to Goa where it remained until it was again despatched to Portugal at the end of 1609 in the good care of Father Pero Francisco, the newly appointed Procurator travelling to Rome.[94] The same «safe person» travelling on the galleon named Santiago

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[91] *Idem*, p. 62, letter from Jerónimo Xavier to the Father Provincial in Goa, dated from Lahore on 25th September 1606: «Last year I wrote to your Reverence from the city of Agra about what happened that year but as troubled times broke out I fear that neither the letters nor some Persian books sent to India for the Father Procurator to take to Rome arrived. I hope to God that they arrive this year and now the roads are more peaceful». In the year 1606 the Chronicler says: «With the death of Akbar all things were perturbed for, though the Prince his son was at once acclaimed king, but as he was much disliked there were many uprisings in many provinces, especially in Cambaya from where the Fathers communicated with us, (and) this year we received no letters from them, but some which came through Sind, but they were short and old». Cf. AHSI, *Goa* 33, fl. 188. But later these expected letters arrived and with them the Chronicler wrote the annual of 1606 of the Moghul, cf. *Idem* fl. 224—232.

[92] A. H. S. I. *Goa* 46, 1 fol. 64. Letter from Jerónimo Xavier to the Father General, Claudio Acquaviva, dated from Lahore, 24 September 1607, asking him if he had received «the letters written from Lahore last year and the book of the Gospels in Persian we had sent Your Paternity to be offered to His Holiness in the name of the Fathers of this mission as it is the original and is very ancient that is at least over 300 years old and according to yet another computation likely to be over 800 years old. Father Francisco Vieira was taking it but as he was shipwrecked I do not know what happened to it».

[93] ALFREDO BOTELHO DE SOUSA, *Subsídios para a História marítima da Indis* (1589—1669) Vol. (1605—1617), Lisboa 1948 pp. 5 and 6. «Nossa Senhora de Betancor on returning to the Kingdom ran aground in the island of St. Lourenço where it was stranded fourteen days with a broken mast and was obliged to throw much cargo overboard; from there she went to Mombasa and in September 1606 arrived in Goa where the journey terminated». On p. 6 n. 1 it is stated that this description is according to the *Compêndio Universal de todos os Viso-Reis, etc.* by Father MANUEL XAVIER S. J. But, as asserted SIMÃO FERREIRA PAIS in *As Famosas Armadas Portuguesas,* the vessel returned on 31 October 1607.

[94] WICKI, vol. XII pp. 974—994: *F. Sebastião Gonçalves, Historici Relatio de Martyribus Salsetanis*, Goa, December 1609 cf. pp. 987—988: «This order of N. R. F. General was entirely accomplished by the F. Provincial Gaspar Fernandez in the year 1606, that was to send by F. Francisco Rodriguez, Procurator in Japan, a tibia or the whole bone of a leg and by Francisco Vieira, the Procurator in India, the bone of an arm also whole. And because in that year the journey to the Kingdom was less auspicious than one might hope for, none of the holy relics reached the hands of Dom Rodrigo Pacheco

e São Philippe, must therefore have also brought the five books of the Gospels in Persian to Portugal where they arrived in 1610, allowing the two copies intended for the Profess House and the Roman College to go all their way to Rome and so ending their tribulations that same year. The copy offered to the Profess House is now at the Casanatense Library, while the copy that went to the Roman College is kept in the library of the Gregorian University and bears a handwritten note in Italian, dated 26th December 1610 stating: «The Very Rev. Father General entrusted this book to me for the secret library».[95]

As to the now lost original intended for the Pope, we have seen from Pinheiro's already referred note of August 1609 that the Father Provincial, for «certain reasons» thought it best to retain it, for the time being, in Goa. It is a curious coincidence that Francisco Vieira, the Procurator involved in the shipwreck of 1606, in May 1609 became the Father Procurator who must have taken such a decision.[96] However, I do not think that the «reasons» behind such a precautionary measure might have only been related to a providential warning of the wreckage, but more likely they have to be associated with the doubts the Jesuits must have had about the Persian translation of the Four Gospels in «vulgari lingua», which differed from the Vulgate, and their genuine preoccupation of not offering the Pope a book which might finally be put on the Index. How this manuscript passed later on into the hands of William Marsden, is not known; it is nevertheless a fact that in 1835, he presented it to the Library of King's College, London, which in October 1920 transferred it to the School of Oriental and African Studies, from where it disappeared soon after.

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because the galleon on which the Viceroy Aires de Saldanha sailed in the company of Fr. Francisco Rodriguez, ran aground on the 14th September in front of the fortress of São Gião in the harbour of Lisbon and we do not know whether the holy relic that was on her was found. The other galleon called Nossa Senhora de Betancor whose captain was Braz Telles, and in which Fr. Francisco Vieira had embarked, spent the winter in Mombasa and returned to Goa where she was dismantled as incapable of continuing the journey. With it there returned the other holy relic which was to be sent again to the Kingdom by a safe person, and it was thereafter carried by Pero Francisco, the Procurator elected to go to Rome that year 1609 in the galleon Santiago and S. Phelippe, whose captain was Braz Correa who had just left his post in the Treasury department of this State».

[95] *Arch. Univ. Gregorian,* Roma, n. 86, fol. 239v.

[96] A. H. S. I. *Goa,* I, f. 292 v. (Annual letter 1609) «The Provincial Fr. Gaspar Fernandes handed over the charge of the Province to Fr. Francisco Vieira on May 17th. The latter was then rector of the College of St. Paul. I am grateful to Father Teotónio de Sousa, S. J. for this information.

II

It is rightly considered that an exhaustive study of the translation of the Four Gospels in Persian, to be undertaken by New Testament specialists, with knowledge of oriental languages — analogous to the one made by Guidi on the Arabic translation[97] — is still wanting.[98] In order to try and stimulate the interest of prospective historians and linguists to carry out this most deserving task, I felt it useful to bring out the data I gathered on the subject after examining some of the existing translations, beginning with the two copies transcribed from the original written in 718 of the Hegira, which are kept respectively at the «Archivum Pontificiae Gregorianae»[99] and at the Casanatense Library.[100] They both have an identical certificate in Spanish, written by Xavier and dated Agra, September 1605, and the duplicate which is deposited in the Gregorian University bears a Latin translation of the same certificate, written later by a different hand.

We shall now reproduce this annotation in English: «This is the book of the Four Gospels. It is written in Persian and has been faithfully transcribed from an original that was written in the year 790 of the Moors, which starts from the time when their cursed sect began and their years are of the moon and then to now there have passed 1014 years, and though the Persian language contains some words that are at discord with those now used, it does not seem reason enough to change them so as not to take from this book the authority of its antiquity, and for the same reason, I did not wish to amend some small faults which can be clearly seen were made by the scribe as anyone can well see, and if one starts amending them suspicions might arise that other things of more substance have also been changed. The original reached our hands almost miraculously and it seems to us priests who are part of this mission to the Moghul that this book is worthy of any library and so we present it with great joy and charity to

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97 I. GUIDI, *Le traduzioni dei Vangeli in arabo e in etiopico*, in *Memorie di scienze morali storiche e filologiche dell'Academia dei Lincei*, 4 (1888) pp. 1—37.

98 ROSSI, *op. c.*, p. 16.

99 *Archiv. Univ. Greg. Roma*, n. 86 which has the following card in Latin: «Liber quattuor Evangeliorum idiomate persico conscriptus, translatus ex originali scripto anno 790 Maurorum ... et hodie 1014 (Codice in carta indiana, in buono stato rilegato in pergamena 17 x 17 cm. Inviato dell'Oriente dal p. Caetano (name which was struck out and substituted by Hieronimo) Xavier sui primi del s. XVII, come si ricava da una notizia autografa posta in principio del codice stesso)».

100 BONELLI, *Cataloghi dei Codici Orientali di Alcune Biblioteche d'Italia*, 1878, pp. 434 to 435 describes the copy at the Casanatense Library in Rome: «1. (2322). Cartaceo, carta 224; dim. 260 x 170, lin 13; ogni pagina incorniciata con fileti nero, rosso e bleu. Titoli dei 4 Evangelii e dei Capitoli in rosso. Carattere táaliq grande elegantissimo; legatura in pergamena. Sul dorso: Evangelia persice. Sull'interno della copertina a destra, in un cartelino incollato Quatuor evangelia, persica lingua e litteris exarata. Ad calcem Evangelii Marci notatur mensis sciuval et annus 718 (hegirae) Xti ani 1362 (sic) et p. 16 (ora 98) ad calcem evang. Lucae ponitur mensis Zilcade an. 718 (non vero 782 ut notavit in margine anonimus) par manus oratoris Sergy Lug (id este qui distorto est oculto) p. 24 (ora 167)».

our Father General for the library of the Roman College. This holy book was transcribed in the year 1605 in the month of September in this city of Agra in the Court of the Great Moghul. Jeronimo Xavier».[101]

Besides this certificate, the copy of the Gregorian University has two other annotations by Xavier. In the first one, at the beginning of the Gospel of St. Luke, at the side of the Persian text of a short colophon, stating: «In the name of our Lord. The Gospel according to St. Luke. With the help of Jesus Christ, we are going to write the Gospel according to St. Luke. Chapter I. Thus spoke Apostle Luke», Xavier has given a Latin translation of it and wrote in Portuguese the following comments: «these words show us that the one / who translated this book into Persian was a christian /.»[102]

The second note in the same Gospel is in the margin of folio 125 verso, facing another colophon in Persian, which Xavier translated into Portuguese and commented as follows: «And it was written in the holy month of Zilcad[103] on the sixth day of the year eighty and ten and seven hundred by the hand of Çarqueç Luch interpreter. Though for these words the one who wrote it seems to be a Moor, from the original and the place where it has a title on St. Luke we may deduce that the translation is more ancient than its transcription that dates from the year 790. It seems that the translator was a Christian and the one who transcribed it was a Moor».[104]

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101 *Arch. Univ. Greg.* n. 86 fl. 239. The other duplicate in the Casanatense Library has a similar certificate by Xavier, dated September 1605 which is reproduced by BONELLI, *op. c.*, pp. 434—435.

102 *Arch. Univ. Greg.* 86 fol. 53v. On the margin there is a note in Latin and Portuguese by Xavier which says: «Id est bonum nuncium lucj in virtute / domini mei et dileti mei Jesu Christi / incipiam scribere Euangelium boni nuncij lucj Apostoli. cap. 1no quae dixit lucas apostolus / destas palauras se colige ser christiano el / que traduseo este liuro en Persio /». A similar note is in the margin of fol. 92 v of the copy that is in the Casanatense Library which says: «Id est Evangelium Lucij in virtute dei mei, Et dileti mei Jesu Christo, incipiam scribere Evangelium boni nuncij lucij apostoli. Cap. 1a dixit Luca apostolus, daqui se colige ser christiano el que lo traducio en parsio».

103 CHARDIN, *op. c.*, vol. III p. 194—195 calls this month «Zilcadé the sacred», that is, «one of the four months the Arabs named months of truce and sacredness», during which all hostilities between enemies ceased: this was for them to see to their agriculture and to look after the cattle without fear or danger; and for that reason they are called sacred, employing a word that signifies «the month when the weapons are hung on the hook». According to the dictionary, ROSNAMA el ARABIYAH, it is the 11th month Dhu al Qi'adat of the Islamic movable calendar that corresponds to the months of July/August of the Julian fixed calendar.

104 *Arch. Univ. Greg.* n. 86, fl 125v, Xavier's Spanish text is the following: «Id est fue escrito el mês bendito de Zilcad a los seis del, del año ochenta diez y setecientos por mano de Çarqueç Luch interprete. Aunque por estas palavras parece ser moro el que lo escrivio, del original de um lugar que esta con el titulo sobre S. Lucas se colige que el interprete y traductor era cristiano por donde se puede coligir que la traducció e mas antigua que seu traslado que fue el año 790. Parece que el traductor fue cristiano e el que lo traslado era mouro». The copy at the *Casanatense* has a similar note in Portuguese with some minor changes cf. fl. 167 (now 170) stating «quiere dizer, fue escrito enel año o mes bendito Zilcad a los seis del, del año (*dezasseis* arriscado) oitenta e dez e setecentos por mão de çarqueç Luch interprete. Aunque esta nota parece de moro, de un lugar del original que esta enel titulo sobre el 1o Capo de S. Lucas se colige que el interprete y traductor era P. christiano por que dize que comiença el tal livro con virtude de nosso Sor o nosso amado Jesu. Puede ser que el que lo traduzo fusse chris-

Xavier erred on the year, which must be 718, as we shall see from the correct translation of the date written in Arabic in the said colophon, which reads: «It was written on the sixth of the holy month of Ziga't *eight*, ten and seven hundred by Kalamdji Sarkis Loudj. / Amen».[105]

The date of 718 A. H. does not offer the slightest doubt in the light of another early copy of the Four Gospels in Persian, currently held at the Library of Leningrad, written by the same scribe, here named Serghis Loutch ben Emir Melik. The indication at the end of the Gospel of Saint Luke where he is calling himself «Kalamdji» proves that he completed this particular Gospel on the 6 Zil-Caadeh 718 (1318—1319) the day of Saint Bartholomew.[106] It is also clear from the incomplete manuscript at the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon that it is that same date which is written in

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tiano y el que lo escrivio moro, por donde se puede coligir que la traduccio e mas antigua que el traslado della e del ano 790 de los moros». We give below an English translation of it: «I mean to say, it was written in the holy month of Zelcad on the sixth of the year (sixteen crossed out) eighty and ten and sevenhundred by hand of çarqueç Luch interpreter. Though this note appears to have been written by a Moslem, from a place of the original that is on the title of Chapter 1 of St. Luke, it can be assumed that the interpreter and translator was a christian P. for when he begins that said book he says he does it *by virtue of our Lord our beloved Jesus*. It may be that the person who translated it was a christian and the one who wrote it was a Moslem and from this one can gather that the translation is more ancient than the transcription of it which is in the year 790 of the Moslems». It is interesting to point out, in this last note, the additional words (in italics) that induced Xavier to infer that the translator was a Christian and the insertion of the letter P. before «Christian» which seems to imply that he considered that the latter was a «Padre», not unlikely of Roman Catholic obedience. Xavier had also referred to him as «someone dear to our Faith», cf. *supra* n. 12.

[105] Like all other Moslems, the Persians always wrote the dates of the Hegira in Arabic, first writing the unit, followed by the decimal and the hundreds etc., which must have confused Jerónimo Xavier — he was not conversant with the Arabic — and he erroneously read «Tmanin» (eighty) when it was Thmania» (eight) then by adding ten to the eighty obtained the ninety and with the addition of seven hundred reckoned 790.

[106] *Catalogue des Manuscrits et Xylographes Orientaux de la Bibliothèque Imperiale Publique de St. Petersbourg*. Saint Petersbourg 1852 — cf. pp. 241—243. — CCXLVIII. «*Les quatre Évangiles*. Manuscript très net, à filets rouges et bleus, écrit en taalic, par Serghis Loutch ben Emir Melik, qui a terminé l'Évangile de St.-Matthieu (f. 1—58) le 20 de chevval 728=1327, 8, à la fête de St. Barthelemy, celui de St.-Marc (f. 59—96) le même mois 718=1318, celui de St.-Luc (f. 96—163) le 6 si'l-caadeh 718=1318, 9, où il se nomme Kalamdji, et celui de St.-Jean enfin le même mois 7 (18?), car il n'y a que *sept cent*. 211 f. grand in-8°. La copie appartenait jadis à Eusebius Renaudot (Doubr.) Cette traduction, dont nous ignorons l'auteur, est différente de celle imprimée dans la *Biblia polyglotta* de Walton». — It is worth mentioning that there is at the Royal Library in Brussels, a transcription made on the 6 Zil-Caadeh 1074 Hegira (31 May 1664) of the same Four Gospels in Persian written by «Sarkis ben Amir Moulk», no doubt the same scribe. Cf. J. VAN DEN GHEYN S. J., *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*. T. I. Bruxelles 1901, p. 38—39. MACLER, *Mission en Belgique, etc. op. c.*, pp. 290—293. A. SAROUKHAN, *Belgica and the Armenians, Handes Amsorya*, Vienna 1936, April-June fasc. 4—6, pp. 212—214 (in Armenian) ANASSIAN, *Armenian Bibliography*, YEREVAN 1976, Vol. II, col. 539—540 (in Armenian). This copy of the Four Gospels has the particularity of containing several annotations in Armenian and on the first white page of the cover an Armenian inscription in a different handwriting declaring: «I Markar di Khosrov wrote on the $17^{6}_{7}2$ Anzali». Anzali, where Markar di Khosrov wrote in Armenian in 1772, is a Persian port on the Caspian

Arabic at the end of St. Luke's Gospel, with the name of the scribe given in Persian as Sarkis Loudj ben Amir Maleik. Furthermore, though in the identical copy at the Casanatense Library, Xavier repeated the same mistake, this did not influence Bonelli who, in describing the book, reproduced the original Persian text of the colophon with the following commentary: «The translation has therefore to be considered anterior to the year 718 A. H., that is 1318 A. D.».[107]

It is not clear on what grounds Xavier based his conclusion that the person who transcribed the Gospel was a Moor. His opinion, in this case also, is debatable. Xavier seems to have become perplexed by the fact that Sarkis Loudj classified the month of «Ziga't» as «mubarak» — which he translated as «holy» — and considering that one who would give such an epithet to a month of the Moslem Calendar could only be a Moslem himself. Though this points again to a deduction made by someone not altogether conversant with the knowledge of Arabic and of the Islamic calendar, according to which, each month of the Hegira has its own epithet. It is a fact that Xavier confessed many times not to understand Arabic, being unable to read the Koran in its original language and needing to have recourse to Persian and Portuguese translations.[108]

While in the colophon under review, Xavier did not incorrectly translate the word Kalamdji as interpreter / translator, it is for consideration whether in this text the said word has not a broader sense.[109] In the colo-

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Sea, where, it is interesting to note, an Armenian graduate of the Urban College in Rome, Friar John, son of Isaac, was residing in 1777 and where there were always Catholic traders from Astrakan, Georgia and parts of Turkey, on account of the trade of the famous silk of the Province of Gilan. Cf. Carmelites, *op. c.*, p. 719. The last Jesuit at Rasht in the Province of Gilan on the Caspian Sea left in 1760, while at the end of 1770 the Dominican Fr. Norbert Secker came to that city where there were at that time only 35 Armenians, mainly involved in the silk trade, cf. *idem* p. 703—705. According to some annotations in these Gospels, it is known that the manuscript belonged to Dr. Henderson, missionary Tutor, and were sold with his books in 1854, after his demise. Henderson was originally a member of the London and Foreign Bible Society which he left around the time he wrote the book «*Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia, including a Tour in the Crimea and the passage of the Caucasus*», London 1826. There is no reference in it to the above mentioned manuscript of the Gospels in Persian. Henderson also wrote other books on the Turkish translation of the Bible which I have not seen. T. W. M. MARSHALL, *Les Missions Chrétiennes*, Paris 1865. In his polemical account Marshall refers to Dr. Henderson's activities and his Protestant companions on both banks of the Volga and the distribution of more than one hundred thousand copies of Bibles, Treaties and of the New Testament in Tatare among the Tatares-Nogai, which «ont produit autant de fruit spirituel qu'un pareil nombre de feuilles blanches l'eût fait».

107 BONELLI, *op. c.*, p. 435 and *supra* n. 104. On the inside cover of the Casanatense copy there is a description of the manuscript which also gives the date as 718 of the Hegira, on the margin of which an anonymous hand wrote: «non vero 782».

108 CAMPS, *op. c.*, pp. 35 and 172.

109 According to Professor Papazian (his letter of 10th March 1976) Kalamdji is a vocable formed by the Arab word Kalam (word) and the Montolian-Turkish suffix «dji», or «Tchi», that indicates the profession, or occupation of someone. In the Middle Ages «Kalam» generally meant «Word of God», or of the «Holy Books». However, Kalamdji must be accepted as signifying theologian, preacher, one who interprets, explains and preaches the word of God. Cf. H. ADJARIAN, *Dictionary of Roots* (in armenian) Armatakan Bararan, 7 vols. Erevan 1926—35.

phons of Armenian manuscripts of the XIVth and XVth centuries, as well as in the works of the Armenian author of the XVIIth century, Krikor Daranaghtzi, all the Armenian priests of the Catholic faith who accompanied the Europeans of the Order of Preachers were called «Kalamdji», whose mission was not to be mere translators, for they interpreted orally the contents of the Scriptures extracted from the Sermons.[110] Therefore, it seems more likely that Sarkis Loudj, «the Preacher», who transcribed the Gospels in Persian in 718 A. H., was also a Christian, as the one who rendered them into the language. In these circumstances, Sarkis Loudj himself could have made the Persian translation. However, it seems significant that when «Kalamdji» Sarkis Loudj described himself in the colophon as being the one who wrote the Gospels, the word «Kalamdji» (Preacher) was used merely to point out his occupation, and not to imply that he was also the translator.[111] Sarkis clearly not being the author it is not possible to be

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[110] KRIKOR DARANAGHTZI, *Chronicles* . . . Yerevan (in Armenian) p. 381. CONSTANTINE YERZENGATZI, *Dagher* — Yerevan 1962 (in Armenian) p. 111. The late Armenologist, Haig BERBERIAN, in a letter dated 25th June 1977, advised me that in the Lexicon of foreign words in the above work of Krikor Daranaghtzi, the Editor translated «Kalamdji» by Traductor. According to Berberian the hypothesis put forward by Papazian did not seem valid because an European missionary required to be accompanied by an interpreter and not by a preacher. In the particular context of our Persian Gospels I am, however, still inclined to share the meaning proposed by Papazian.

[111] M. A. van den OUDENRIJN O. P., *Bishops and Archbishops of Naxivan* (thereafter *Bishops*) in the *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum,* Vol. VI, Rome 1936, p. 161—216, cf. p. 166. MACLER, *Notices de Manuscripts arméniens vus dans quelques bibliothèques de l'Europe Centrale,* Paris 1913, cf. p. 14. Both mention an Armenian manuscript written in Caffa in the XIVth Century which Hovannes Travrijetsi (John II of Tabriz) archbishop of Naxivan (1374—1377) thereafter transferred to Caffa, is designated Hovann, with the addition of the Latin word: «Praedicator» rendered in Armenian characters. According to Oudenrijn he must have been a Dominican. ROSSI, *op. c.*, pp. 173—174, *Borg. Pers.* n. 19 Four Gospels in Persian. At the end of the Gospel of Luke f. 177 there is an arabic colophon which states that this Gospel was transcribed in 738 A. H. (1338 A. D.) by a religious called «the Frank Preacher (Kalamdji al-Farandji) son of Nour-ed-din humble servant of Zea-ed-din Khodja . . .» This translation made by Papazian from the relative part of the MS, differs from that given by ROSSI p. 174. Following the above colophon, there are notes written in 815 A. H. (1412 A. D.), 935 A. H. (1533 A. D.) and on fol. 179 v a colophon again translated by Papazian stating «This holy Gospel was transcribed by (name illegible) written in 1021 on the Thursday of the Holy month of Teshrin. According to the Armenian Era in 1052 — (1603 AD)». 1021 seems to be a transcription error for 1012 of Hegira, which corresponds to the year 1603. It is important to point out the adjunction of the word «Frank» (Al-Farandji) to «Kalamdji» (Preacher) because this attribute generally meant that the person, or religious, was obedient to the Roman Catholic Church and in that particular case possibly a member of the Order of Preachers which had been active in the area of the Lake of Ourmiah since 1318. It is known that since the XIVth century the Armenian population of Siounie, united religiously with Rome, under the influence of Friar Bartholomaeus de Podio of the Order of Preachers, and later of the Armenian Congregation of the Unitor Brothers, founded in 1331 to promote the Union of the Armenian Church and the Holy See of Rome. These Armenian catholics used to be called «Frank» both by Europeans and Moslems to differentiate them from the others who had remained obedient to the Armenian Apostolic Church. Cf. MERCERIAN S. J., *op. c.*, p. 298. In Carmelites, *op. c.*, p. 375 at the beginning of the XVIIth century it is reported that in Persia «to become a Catholic is here called by no other name than to become a Frank (Farandji)». PIETRO DELLA VALLE, *op. c.*, Vol. II, pp. 324—325 related that in 1618 his interpreter, the Armenian Jacob — no doubt a catholic — was told by Shah

more specific than Xavier in saying that the translation was made by a Christian. It is difficult to give a definite opinion on the nationality of Kalamdji Sarkis Loudj. He may well have been an Armenian catholic possibly in communion with the Order of Preachers (as were then called the Dominican missionaries). The fact that Sarkis specifically mentioned that he terminated the Gospel of St. Matthew on the day of St. Bartholomew, the Apostle who, according to Armenian tradition, together with St. Thaddeus spread the Gospel in Armenia, seems to point out his nationality. It is worth emphasizing also that these Four Gospels were written between 1318 and 1328 AD when Bartholomaeus de Podio and his companions of the Order of Preachers had settled down in the region South-East of the Lake of Ourmiah and established friendly relations with the Armenian Convents in the vicinity. In 1328 Ohvanes, the Superior of the Armenian convent of Querna near Nakhitchevan, came to Ourmiah to stay with Bartholomaeus. In 1330 Ohvanes convinced the latter to accompany him back to Querna where, with the assistance of the Italian Preacher, he founded one year later the Armenian Congregation of the Unitor Brothers.[112] In this connection it is worth recalling that in the middle of the XIIIth century, the Armenian monastery of Saint Thaddeus, in the country of Artaz (now Makou) north of Tabriz, was erected as a new Diocese having under its jurisdiction a certain number of Provinces of Vaspourakan, Persian Armenia, as well as Tabriz, the capital of Mongol Ilkhans. Under the archbishop Zakharia (1298—1347) the bishops and clerics of Artaz became the partisans of the policy of association with the Latin Church in Central Armenia, following the Armenian Catholics of Cilicia and came to be zealous executors of the Latin missionaries' will to propagate Catholicism in the Oriental Countries.[113]

Under Zakharia and Hovhannes Tsortsoretsi, the school of the Monastery of Tsortzor became the cultural center of the Diocese of Artaz, where several works of eminent representatives of the European scholastics, such as Thomas of Aquin, Nicholas de Lyra, Bonaventure, etc., were translated into Armenian.[114]

However, as the principal mission of the order of Preachers was to evangelize the native population in Persia, for which objective Bartholomaeus had indeed learned Persian, it is presumed that the Preachers missionaries felt the need to have at their disposal the Gospels translated into that language. The Armenian catholic priests, on the other hand, were no doubt most anxious to be of assistance to their brothers in religion and to do so

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Abbas that he was Frank; Jacob replied in the negative, saying he was Armenian. The king then declared that he was right «they were all Armenians and there were no Franks at all».

[112] An assessment of the activities of the Armenian Congregation of the Unitor Brothers is made by P. GREGORIO PETROWICZ «*I Fratres Unitores nella Chiesa Armena*» (1330—1360) Pontificia Università Urbaniana, Roma 1969, extract from «*Euntes Docete*» XXII (1969) pp. 309—347.

[113] L. S. KHATCHIKIAN, *La Principauté Arménienne d'Artaz et l'Ecole de Tsortsor*, in *Pamper Matenadarani* n. 11 — 1974 (in Armenian) Resumé in French, cf. p. 210.

[114] Ibid.

they must have undertaken, during that initial period, if not the translation of the Gospels, at least transcriptions from already existing versions.

It is equally worthwhile pointing out that the copy of the Gospel in the Casanatense contains, in addition to Xavier's certificate of September 1605 and notes similar to those described above, two other notes written by the latter that are absent from the one at the Gregorian University. In them Xavier explains that in the original, the story of the adulterous woman was written clearly out of place, at the end of Chapter 10 of Saint John's Gospel, therefore, when copying the manuscript he replaced the narrative at the beginning of Chapter 8, where he considered it belonged.[115]

The particular location of this story raises an intriguing and controversial point; in this connection it is worth recalling the comments made in the thirteenth century (around 1255) by Hibat Allah Ibn Al-Āssāl of Cairo in his Arabic edition of the Gospels, translated from the Coptic and collated with existing Arabic translations of Greek, Syriac and Coptic versions.[116] In it, on the margin of the Pericope of the woman taken in adultery placed in John VII, 53—VIII, 11, he wrote that «this is not found in the Coptic but is found in many Arabic codices, although in some of them it is only written in lines differing from the lines of the text and with a note over against it that it is not in Coptic. And I have found it in a single Coptic codex; it is said that it was transferred from the Arabic codices to the Coptic language. Nor is it in the Greek codex which I have in two columns — Greek and Arabic — the translation of Ibn Tūfayl. And it is not in the text of the other Arabic codex, the translation of the same, but on a small sheet joined to it, and its scribe has noted in it as follows: *This section is missing in the codex from which I have written, an excellent ancient codex, and I have transcribed this section from another codex.* And I found a marginal note in the translation from the Syriac, as follows: *This section is not in the Syriac or the Greek and is only found in the translation of the*

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[115] CASANATENSE, Ms. n. 2322. At the end of Chapter 10 (fol. 198) in the Gospel of St. John, on the margin after the sign ⁂ «Take note of that which is said here. In the original, the story of the adulterous woman is put here, but clearly one can see that it is out of place and for that reason it has been placed at the beginning of chapter 8th»; in chapter 8 (fol. 189) on the margin «Chapter 8 this story of the adulterous woman, in the original is not here but it is in chapter 10 at the end after the sign ⁂ but as in this same original it is noticeable that it is missing from its proper place this story is thus put here and because in the said chapter 10 one can see very clearly it is out of its proper place». In Chapter 21 (fol. 223) of the same Gospel of St. John, one can read on the margin «these words that have/ a stroke were missing from the original as they were scratched and the paper torn».

[116] KENNETH E. BAILEY, *Hibat Allah Ibn Al-Āssāl and his Arabic thirteenth century critical edition of the Gospels* in *Theological Review,* The Near East School of Theology, Beirut vol. I, n. 1 April 1978, pp. 11—26. Among the manuscripts at his disposal, Al-Āssāl had a Greek-Arabic one, translated by Theophilus Ibn Tufayl of Damascus, and dated in Arabic on the margin AH 438 (1046 A. D.), and an Arabic translation and commentary made from the Syriac by Ibn al Tayyib, monk, doctor, philosopher and Nestorian theologian, whose full name was Abu-L-Faradj 'Al Allah al-Iraqi. Ibn al Tayyib equally translated into Arabic the Diatessaron of Tatien; he died in 435 / 1043. Cf. *Encyclopédie de l'Islam* N. E. 1971 T. III p. 979. Since the VIIIth century, Arabic versions of the Gospels directly translated from the Greek, or from the Peshito, or at least revised on this Syriac version, were in the hands of the Christians from Syria, cf. *idem*. «Indjil» p. 1236.

Coptic, so I have written it that it may not be lacking in the codex. It is written on the margin in Syriac in some Syriac Gospels, but not in others. And I found it also in a Gospel in a Syriac hand belonging to Ambã Yũnus, the Matran of Damascus; it is in a delicate hand by another pen than that of the text and there has been noted over against it as follows: «*This section is not in the Syriac and* Bũlã *only interpreted it from the chapters of the Alexandrians.*»[117]

It is appropriate to refer also to the comments made on the Four Gospels by Cornelius A. Lapide at the end of the XVIIth century. According to the author who says that he used Xavier's manuscript of the Persian Gospels held at the time in the Roman College, these Gospels as well as the Coptic, Egyptian and Ethiopian versions may be utilised, «but prudently and with a grain of salt, because they do not have such an authority and credence as the Greek and Latin Gospels. However, they confirm and illustrate both of them».[118] As regards the story of the adulterous woman, Cornelius A. Lapide asserts that neither St. Cyril, St. Chrisostom, nor any Greek commentators, nor Syrians, have or speak of it, while all the Latin and Arab commentators include it. It is also in the Vulgate version approved by the Council of Trent in 1546.[119] On the other hand, the Synod of Diamper summoned on 25th June 1599 by Dom Aleixo de Meneses, Archbishop of Goa, to expurgate the errors of the Christians of St. Thomas in Malabar who were ministered by Bishops appointed by the Patriarch of Babylon, decided «to restitute to the Gospels, in conformity with the Latin edition, the missing parts of the amended Chaldean books, such as the history of the adulterous woman, which is not found at the beginning of Chapter 8 of the Gospel of Saint John, in the books of the New Testament written in Syrian, or Syriac, used by this Bishopric».[120]

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[117] DUNCAN D. MACDONALD, *Ibn al Ãssãl's Arabic Version of the Gospels* in *Homenaje D. Francisco Cordera* (Saragoza, Mariano Escar, 1904) pp. 375—392. Cf. pp. 391—392 Macdonald's English translation, which I have reproduced in the text above, of Al-Ãssãl's note in Arabic.

[118] R. P. CORNELLI ALAPIDE S. J., *Commentarius in Quatuor Evangelia*, Antuerpiae 1695. Ch. III, De Interpretibus Evangeliorum, cf. p. 11. Though Alapide stated that he used the Persian manuscript at the Roman College, it seems that he only made a superficial study of it, limiting himself to repeat Xavier's comments that this codex was transcribed from the original in the year 790 (sic) of the Moors but that the original itself was much more ancient and thus it had many Persian words entirely different from those the Persians used at his time.

[119] Idem, cf. VIII, *Commentaria in Joannem,* cf. p. 368.

[120] *Synodo Diocesano da Igreja e Bispado de Angamale dos antigos Christãos de Sam Thome das Serras do Malavar das partes da India Oriental* ... Coimbra 1606, published at the end of the *Jornada do arcebispo de Goa Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes Primaz da India Oriental* ... por Frey ANTONIO DE GOUVEA, Coimbra 1606 f. 9, 3rd Action, Cf. XIV, 2nd Decree. H. ZOTEMBERG, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Syriaques et Sabéens (Mandaites) de la Bibliothèque Nationale,* Paris 1874. In the Gospel of St. John, the Peschitto version usually omits the story of the adulterous woman, but it is sometimes found in the version of Thomas of Heraclee. For the Peschitto, the story is missing in nr. 28, Xth or XIth century; nr. 30, 1203 AD; nr. 32, 1218 AD; nr. 34, probably VIIth cent.; nr. 37, XIth cent., For Thomas of Heraclee, n. 54, 1192 AD; the story has been added later in the margin of f. 206 v (Ch. VIII of John) with the mention that its translation is attributed to Abbas Mar-Paul; nr. 56, 1264 AD, the story in John VII, 53—VIII, 11, with the same attribution; the carschouni (arabic language written in

It is worth mentioning at this stage the position of the Armenian Church, in relation to the story of the adulterous woman. Saint Nicon, famous missionary of the Levant, is reported to have listed, among other mistakes also made by the Armenians in the year 560 A. D., the one of having removed the story of the adulterous woman from the Gospel of Saint John.[121] Towards the end of the XVIIth century, Father Monier, S. J. referring to this fact, commented that as this story is not to be found in some Greek manuscripts, nor in those of the Church of Antioch, the Armenian translation that apparently was made from these documents, cannot be held responsible for this omission, the more so as he added «that this story bears no relation whatsoever to their particular feelings and ought not therefore to interest them».[122] In Vardapet Vardan's book «Solutions on extracts of the Holy Scripture», written in Armenian in the XIIth century, at the request of Hethoum I, King of Armenia, he pointed out that: «the narration of the adulterous woman which the other Christians find in the Gospel is the work of a certain Papias, disciple of John, who wrote heresies and was repudiated. It is Eusebius who says so. It was written posteriously».[123] Evariste Prudhomme, who translated the text into French,

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Syriac characters) version published by ERPENIUS, Novum D.N. Jesu Christi Testamentum, Leyden 1616, has it too.

121 FLEURIAU, *Estat présent de l'Arménie tant pour le Temporel que pour le Spirituel*, Paris 1694, published on pages 366—396, *Extrait d'un Traité de S. Nicon sur la Religion des Arméniens,* which states the following on pp. 375—376: «Ils ont retranché de l'Evangile l'endroit ou il est marqué que notre Seigneur eut une sueur de sang, et que la terre en fut tout baignée, ils regardent cela comme une faiblesse qui déshonore la Majesté divine. Ils retranchèrent aussi l'endroit ou notre Seigneur pressé de prononcer sur la femme adultère qu'on lui avait amenée, ordonne que celui qui serait sans Pêchè, lui jettât la première pierre; voyant que tous ses accusateurs s'étaient retirés, il ne la condamna point. Ils prétendent que cette histoire peut produire de mauvaise effets». FR. JOÃO BAUTISTA DE S. ANTONIO, *Paraiso Seráfico, plantado nos lugares santos da Redempção* ... P. I. Lisboa 1734, p. 539: referring to the same sources of «the Blessed Nicon, Holy Monk from the same Armenia», mentions that the Armenians do not admit and even consider false the history of the adultery woman.

122 *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses concernant l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Amérique avec quelques relations nouvelles des missions et des notes géographiques*, publiées sous la direction de M. L. AIME MARTIN, Paris 1875—1877, 4 vol. T. I. «Lettres du P. Monier au P. Fleuriau sur l'Arménie cf. pp. 327—328.

123 VARDAPET VARDAN, «*Solutions de passages de l'Ecriture Sainte*». *Extraits traduits de l'arménien vulgaire sur le texte original* par M. EVARISTE PRUD'HOMME, Paris 1867, pp. 22. In a letter from CONYBEARE to Father Dashian, published in *Handes Amsorya* — Vienna 1895 n. 1 January pp. 17—18 (in Armenian) the former referred to the Armenian MS nr. 940 of the Etchmiadzine Library (now E 229) of 989 A. D. in which the said story, Ch. VIII, 1—11 of St. John's Gospels reads translated in English « ... does not come out of Galilee. A certain woman was caught in evil conduct and everybody testified for her conviction. They brought her to Jesus, accused her and wanted to know what he would order. Jesus answered to them and said: Go ye who are innocent and stone her — he then bowed his head and wrote with his finger on the ground explaining to them their sins. And they saw their own sins on the stone and parted full of shame. No one was left behind except the woman. And Jesus told her, go in peace and conduct Mass for your sins and it is written in the law». According to Conybeare this text must have been taken either from Papias, or from the «Gospel according to the Jews», F. C. CONYBEARE, *A Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, London 1913, MS OR 2681, cf. pp. 24—25 Four Gospels, 934 of the Armenian Era (A. D. 1484) written in Jerusalem. As an instance of Vartabed

pointed out that, in fact, this passage is either missing altogether from the Gospel of St. John,[124] or is to be found at the end of the same Gospel in all Armenian manuscripts of the Bible, as in many Greek manuscripts.[125]

Vartan's indication, the pericope of the adulterous woman is found in this Ms at the end of John, f. 288, followed by a note in Armenian, translated in English by Conybeare, which says: «This narrative was received by the Church from the Gospel of the Syrians, on the word of a certain Papias, the disciple of John, who subsequently uttered heresy and was scorned. And it is in the series of the text number 86, and follows the text which says: Examine and see that a prophet arises not out of Galilee. The above account is that of Eusebius». On the other hand, the said pericope, with a separate title on the margin, is in its proper place (=7,53—8,11) in relation to the Vulgate in a manuscript of the year 806 of the Armenian Era (A. D. 1357) in the library of the Vatican, though it contains the same note in Armenian (reproduced above) of the Syriac origin of the mentioned narrative. Cf. E. TISSERANT, *Codices Armeni, Bibliothecae Vaticanae Borgiani Vaticani Barberiani Chisani*, Roma 1927, pp. 117—118. *Codici Borgiani armeni* n. 6.

124 The case of the omission of the pericope of the adulterous woman is found, for instance, in the *Barberiani codex* nr. 117: The Four Gospels written in the Church of St. Sarkis in Constantinople, in 1027 of the Armenian era (1577—1578 AD), cf. E. TISSERANT, *op. c.*, p. 353. It is also omitted in another Manuscript of the XVth Century, cf. F. C. CONYBEARE, *op. c.*, pp. 28—29, nr. 17 Ch. 82; *Thesauri Epistolici Lacroziani Lisiae*, 1742—1746, T. I. p. 290 letter from William Whiston to Lacroze, dated London, 3 January 1729 referring to a similar omission in an Armenian Ms of the Bodleian Library at Oxford «as is the case in the most antic Greek versions». Also in the Gospel written by Johannes in Zeitoun in the year 1666, cf. OSKIAN, *Katalog der Armenischen Handschriften in der Mechitaristen Bibliothek zu Wien*, Wien 1963, cf. p. 1110, summary in German nr. 638.

125 PRUD'HOMME, *op. c.*, p. 22, n. 6 cited one such Armenian manuscript with the narration of the adulterous woman at the end of the Gospel of Saint John, followed by this note «The Gospel has been introduced by the Syrians in our». Among other Armenian manuscripts of the Four Gospels in which the pericope of the adulterous woman is found at the end of the Gospel of St. John, there is the complete Bible copied in 1319,[A] the basis — practically without any modification — of Zorab's edition printed in Viena in the year 1805. Zorab published his critical edition after concerting thirty manuscripts of the Gospels and seven of the Bible.[B] The 1319 copy kept in the Etchmiadzine Library,[C] though relatively recent, nearly always reproduced the text of the Four Gospels transcribed in 939 A. D. «according to some ancient copies that have been corrected». Included with the manuscripts collated by Zorab was the Bible copied in 1295 for King Hethoum of Armenia,[D] which was the keystone of Oskan's first edition of the Armenian Bible printed in Amsterdam in 1666.[E] Before publishing it, Oskan very often completed and modified the text in accordance with the Sixtine Vulgate, placing the said pericope (=7,53—8,11) without indication of the title in a separate place.[F]

A) A complete Bible, deposited in the St. Lazaro Library in Venice, cf. SARKISSIAN *Grand Catalogue of the Armenian manuscripts in the Library of the Mekhitarist Fathers of St. Lazaro*, T. I. Venice 1914, T. II 1924 (in Armenian), cf. Ms. n. 1.

B) S. LYONNET, S. J., *Les Origines de la version Arménienne et le Diatessaron*. Rome 1950, cf. p. 183—184. Lyonnet also quotes the tetra gospel copied in «1214» at Hawutar of the St. Lazaro library of Venice, nr. 134, in which the pericope of the adulterous woman is, as in the edition of Zorab, at the end of St. John, cf. SARGISSIAN, *cat. op. c.*, col. 589—594. — LOUIS LELOIR, *La Version Arménienne du Nouveau Testament* in the *Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung*, Band 5 — Berlin 1972 cf. p. 305.

C) Ms. nr. 299 of the Etchmiadzine Library.

D) Ms. nr. 157 of same.

E) The first edition of the *Armenian Bible* was printed in Amsterdam in 1666 — 2 vol. in 4°; the *New Testament* pp. 430—718 of the T. II, cf. p. 549. According to MACLER, *Les Livres imprimés arméniens de la Bibliothèque de l'Université d'Amsterdam*, in the *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* T. VI, Fasc. 2, pp. 77—78, Father Oskan bishop of

Father Giuseppe Messina S. J. who studied the Persian Gospels extant at the Gregorian University, expressed the opinion that it had been translated from the Greek.[126] Likewise, Bonelli had earlier stated that the duplicate at the Casanatense conformed mostly to the Greek version and was very different from the Persian translation based on a Syriac original, published

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Yerevan, during the Pontificate of the Catolicos Philipos I, 1633—1655, met a Latin cleric of the Dominican order in Etchmiadzine, whose name was Father Paolo Piromalli, nicknamed in Armenian Sidernatsi (from Siderne in Calabra) with whom he became friendly. These two priests taught each other Latin and Armenian reciprocally and occupied their time with translations. After spending four years in Etchmiadzine, Piromalli returned to Rome with a translation of the Bible in Armenian, collated from the Latin text. He intended to match the Armenian version of the Bible with the Vulgate, and asked the ecclesiastic authorities of Rome to allow him to publish this translation, but this was denied him. Piromalli returned to Etchmiadzine and together with Oskan they modified their translation, thereby further corrupting the ancient Armenian. It seems that Oskan came to Europe with Piromalli for the purpose of publishing the Bible and other works. After their attempts to do so in Leghorn and Rome had failed, Oskan finally carried out his project in Amsterdam in the year 1666. On Paolo Piromalli, Archbishop of the Dominican province of Nakhitchevan in Armenia (1655 to 1664), cf. M. A. Van den OUDENRIJN (O. P.), *Linguae Haicanae Scriptores,* (thereafter *Haicanae*), Berne 1960, pp. 68—69. About his works, *idem* pp. 530—534, also OUDENRIJN, *Bishops,* op. c., Vol. VI, pp. 176—180.

F) *Armenian Bible.* Amsterdam 1666, T. II, p. 549. Cf. also letter from George Whiston to Math. Veyssiere de la CROZE, dated London 19 June 1735, in *Thesauri op. c.,* T. I. p. 363. In the last official Armenian edition of the New Testament, adjusted to the Greek originals, printed in 1975 in Etchmiadzine, cf. p. 273, the narrative of the adulterous woman is placed in Chapter 8 (=8, 1—8, 11). Versicle 1 «And each one returned to his house» has the following note: «In certain Greek manuscripts, this versicle is placed as versicle 53 of Chapter 7. The Greek version either omits it entirely or places Versicle 53 of Chapter 7 in another place, as also the first eleven versicles of Chapter 8». On the other hand, the Association of the Holy Bible, of protestant obedience, published an edition commemorating the centenary of the translation of the Bible in modern Armenian (1853—1953), based upon the original Hebrew and Greek texts, in which the pericope of the adulterous woman, without a separate title, is in its place, (7, 53—8, 11) cf. p. 105 of the book of the New Testament. — *The Greek New Testament,* edited by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black & Bruce M. Metzer, Allen Wikgren (London, United Bible Societies, 1967) see p. 355 in relation to Chapter VIII St. John 1—11 Adulterous Woman, the following list of codices in which St. John's Chapter 7, 53—Chapter 8, 1—11 is omitted: «1) Papyri no. 66: Geneva: P. Bodmer II; 2) Papyri no. 75: Geneva: P. Bodmer XIV, XV; 3) MSS. 01. Sinaiticus (London); 4) MSS. A. 02 Alexandrinus (London); 5) MSS. B. 03 Vaticanus (Rome); 6) MSS. C. 04 Ephremi Rescriptus (Paris); 7) MSS. L. 019 Regius (Paris); 8) MSS. P. (N). 022. Leningrad and elsewhere; 9) MSS. T. 029 Rome; 10) MSS. W. 032 Freer Gospels (Washington); 11) MSS. X. 033 Munich; 12) MSS. Y. 034 Cambridge; 13) MS. (delta) 037 St. Gall; 14) MSS. (Teta) 038 Tiflis: Koridethi; 15) MSS. 044. Athos; 16) X No. 053; 17) 0141; 18) 22; 19) 33; 20) 157; 21) 209; 22) 565; 23) 1230; 24) 1241; 25) 1242; 26) 1253; 27) 2191; 28) Syro-Sinaitic; 29) Syro-Curatonian; 30) Syro-Peshitta; 31) Coptic Sahidic; 32) Coptic Bahairic; 33) Coptic Sub-Achminic (Thompson); 34) Gothic; 35) Armenian (Zohrab); 36) Georgian; 37) Diatessaron; 38) Clement; 39) Tertullian; 40) Origen; 41) Cyprian; 43) Chrysostom; 44) Nonus; 45) Cyrill; 46) Cosmos.» The fact that Chapters VII, 53—VIII, 1—11 are omitted in these MSS does not mean, however, that in all these cases the story is not located in another place, like in 35) Armenian (Zohrab), where it is found at the end of the Gospel of St. John.

[126] GIUSEPPE MESSINA, S. J., *Diatessaron Persiano, I Introduction, II Text and Translation (Italian)* thereafter *Diatessaron,* Roma 1951, cf. p. 29, b. 2.

in London by Walton in 1656.[127] In the «Prolegomenon» of the latter work it is said that only another Persian version existed and that it had been translated from the Greek and printed in London in 1652–1657 by Abraham Wheelocke.[128] The basis of the text was an undated Oxford manuscript, which had been offered to the University by Archbishop Laud

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127 BONELLI, *op. c.*, p. 435. *Biblia Polyglotta, complectentia textus originales, haebraicum, cum pentateucho amarit., chal., gr. ect: cum aparatu, apendicibus, tabulis, ect opus totum editi* BRIANUS WALTONUS, Londini, Th. Roycroft 1657, 6 vol. gr. in-fol. The New Testament (Persian and others) is in vol. V and covers 515 pages. Also vol. 1, pp. 101 and 102. Prolegomena XVI «De Lingua persica & Versionibus Scripturae Persiae» from which we see that «it had been translated from the Syriac text, not however directly from the Greek; on this account a great number of Syriac words appear, the interpretation of which is given by the Persian translator; this shows the great authority of the Syriac version, as we noted above regarding the Armenian version from Gregory, the Syrian. All the Orientals consider it almost the norm and model of all other versions». In this version, as in all the other versions of the Polyglot: Latin Vulgate, Greek, Syriac, Ethiopian and Arabic, the VIIIth Chapter of St. John's Gospel begins with the versicle «In the meanwhile Jesus went to the Mountain of Olives», followed by the separate title XVIII «Sermo de muliere quam in adulterio prehenderent»; cf. Vol. V, p. 442, «Versio Persica cum interpretatione Latine». In his annotation on the Persian translation Thomas Gravius, doctor in Theology, cf. Vol. VI, p. 96 (must be 66) makes the following remarks about part of this narrative in Chapter VIII: «This is missing here and also in Wheelocke's edition, the interpretation of these which is indeed not only the Persian but also the Syriac and particularly even the Latin Vulgate omitted, and are missing in certain Greek codices. Therefore, what a surprise to omit a certain portion of the story of the adulterous woman while in the early times the whole (story) was omitted by some interpreters?» Some passages of the Persian translation of the New Testament have been critised by the French Carmelite, Ange de Labrosse (in religion known under the name of Ange de Saint Esprit), cf. *Parmacopoea persica ex-idiomate persico in latinum conversa* ... Paris 1681, quoted by C. SCHEFER, in his edition of *Estat de la Perse en 1660 par le Père Raphael du Mans*, Paris 1890, p. CIII to IV, who also mentions that this criticism gave rise to an indignant reply from Hyde (one of Walton's collaborators) published in 1685 under the title *«Castigation in A. de la Brosse, carmelitam»*, in which he strongly contests the critic's assertions in respect of the Persian New Testament. Richard Simon in 1690 «complained that he could not see the utility of the Persian version in the London Polyglot, for among other reasons, the translator from Syriac had permitted himself considerable licence», cited in the *New Testament Manuscript Studies,* edited by Merril M. Parkis and Allen P. Wikgren. The Cambridge University Press, 1960, p. 178.

128 *«Quatuor Evangeliorum ... versio Persica Syriacam & Arabicam suavissime redolens: ad verba & mentem Graeci textus fideliter & venuste concinnata. Codicibus tribus Manuscriptis ex Oriente in Academias utrasque Anglorum perlatis. Operose invicem diligenterque collatis.* Per ABRAHAMUM WHELOCUM ... Londini 1652—1657». The pericope of the adulterous woman is in the Gospel of St. John (=7, 53, 8, 11) without a separate title, cf. p. 392. *Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of the Holy Scripture in the Library of the British Foreign Bible Society,* compiled by T. H. DARLOW and H. F. MOULE, Vol. II Polyglots other than English, Part IV, London 1911, cf. pp. 1201—1202. It seems that the Persian text published by Wheelocke was based upon a manuscript in the Oxford Library of a 14th century version, (?) apparently made from a Greek model, that the editor collated from another manuscript, translated from the same language, at Cambridge University. At the end of each chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew, Wheelocke compared the text of both manuscripts with the one transcribed in 1341 originally translated from Syriac, that Walton utilized for the Persian version published in the Polyglot, and on the other hand, with Jeronimo Xavier's *Historia Christi.*

in 1641,[129] and another one at Cambridge, presumably a copy transcribed in Indian talik characters in 1605,[130] the same year that Xavier wrote his certificate in the copies that were sent to Rome. The text of these manuscripts, as well as those of the two copies kept in the Gregorian University and the Casanatense Libraries, are divided into chapters called «fasl» characterised as «European» and sections called «Ishah», which leads us to presume that there was an identical source of the Greek version of the Gospels, translated into Persian, prior to the year 1318 A. D. Under the circumstances, the fact that the story of the adulterous woman, in the Persian Gospels written in 718 A. H. (1318 A. D.) from an earlier original, was neither omitted, or placed at the beginning of Chapter VIII of the Gospel of Saint John, nor at the very end of the same Gospel, but is unusually located at the end of Chapter X, remains intriguing.

Now we shall examine the second ancient book of the Gospels in Persian written «in the year of the Lord eight hundred and twenty eight». We do not know the name of the translator, or of the scribe, but Professor Papazian who read the manuscript, presumes that it was translated from a Syriac original, excluding the possibility of a Greek or Armenian model.[131]

The date «828 of our Lord», mentioned in the Spanish and Portuguese certificates, written by Xavier in 1607 and 1608, also appears in the Persian text he transcribed from this ancient original, the whereabouts or even existence of which are not known. Michaelis Casiri, a Syro-Maronite who compiled the Catalogue of the Arabian-Spanish Library of the Escurial in the XVIIth century, gave a description of the copy sent to Philip II, and commented that while it would not be an easy task to try to discover the name of the author of the translation, or to say from which language it had been rendered into Persian, there was no doubt that the translation had been made prior to the VIIIth century.[132]

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[129] SACHAU and ETHE, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, Part I 1889 cf. cols. 1054—1055, n. 1837.

[130] E. G. BROWNE, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge, Gospels & Christian Theology*, pp. 1—2 Ms. Gg. 5. 26, written in Indian tàliq, has the characteristic of containing two colophons, dated respectively 28 of Rabi 1014 AH (14 August 1605 A. D.) and 26 Muharram 1014 AH (13 June 1605 A. D.). In the first colophon, at the end of the Gospel of St. Luke, the name of the scribe is given as «Sharif». In the second, at the end of the Gospel of St. John, it is stated that it was translated by Mogdan from the Greek language and that those lines were made by Eshah (Isahak).

[131] Professor Papazian has made the following observations: «The transliteration of the proper name in the translation leads one to presume that it may have been translated from Syriac. The possibility of its translation from the Armenian, or Greek, has to be excluded. It is imperative that someone well versed in Persian and Syriac compares it with the Syriac original. A definite opinion can only be expressed after that. The translator's strict abidance with the original text and the words therein, together with the use of lexicographical vocabulary that is not in harmony with the literary language of the time, induces us to suggest that the Persian was not the translator's mother tongue. The translator appears to have been more familiar with the language of the original text from which the translation was made».

[132] CASIRI, *op. c.*, p. 344.

If it could be proved that this was so, it would be a real rarity and indeed a most unique contribution to Persian studies in providing a text translated at a time when modern literary Persian language was in its first stage.

Although this objective is improbable, it is not absolutely impossible in the light of the information given by Saint John Chrisostom (340—407 A. D.) that: «the Persians having translated the doctrines of the Gospel into their own tongue had learned, though barbarians, the true philosophy»[133] and, a century later the declaration made by the Bishop of Cyr Theodoret (± 423 to 458 A. D.) that: «the Hebrew writings were not only translated into Greek but into the Latin, Ethiopian, Persian, Indian, Armenian, Scythian and Sarmatian languages»,[134] assuming therefore that unless Syriac was meant as the language of the Church of Persia, presumably, at the time of the Council of Nicea in A. D. 325, some portion of the Holy Scriptures were translated into Pahlawi, the parent of modern Persian, during the Sásánian Dynasty (A. D. 226—651), when it became the official language of the State and of the Zoroastrian Church.[135]

It is a fact that the evangelical fragments and texts of the Psalms in «middle Iranian» which have reached us had been translated from the Syriac.[136]

However, the discovery that this ancient book had been written in the year 828 of «Our Lord» certainly perturbed Xavier and Pinheiro. It seems to have led them to seriously consider the hypothesis that the other ancient book intended for the Pope, had been copied in the year 718 — that Xavier had misread for 790 — «of Our Lord» and not of the Hegira, as they had presumed until now.[137] Indeed on the 24th of September 1607, on

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[133] REV. CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN, *Christian Researches in Asia: with notices of the translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental Languages*, London 1819, p. 182.

[134] *Idem*, p. 182.

[135] EDWARD G. BROWNE, *A Literary History of Persia,* 4 vols. Cambridge 1928, vol. II, Browne states p. 14 «The earliest extant poetry and prose in Persian, dates from the Muhammadan period and began to be composed more than a thousand years ago and was in fact characterised by certain particularities of style and vocabulary».

[136] G. MESSINA, *Notizia su un Diatessaron Persiano, tradotto del Siriaco*, (thereafter *Notizia*) Roma 1943, pp. 25 and 47, citing F. W. K. MÜLLER, *(Soghdische Texte,* I: *ABH. Preuss. AK Wiss.,* von J. 1932, Berlin 1913; F. C. ANDREAS, *Bruchstücke einer Pehlevi — Übersetzung der Psalmen,* herausg. von Kay Barr: Sitzungsb. Preuss. Ak. d. Wiss; 1933, I, Berlin 1933.

[137] It may also be assumed, for argument's sake, that on the contrary the translator — or more probably the copyist — being supposedly a Christian of Roman Catholic obedience — inadvertently added to the year 828 the words «of Our Lord», when in fact it was «of the Hegira», which would make the date of the copy correspond to the year 1425 AD. In the Lisbon Codex n. 7964, Xavier's certificate in Portuguese, dated Lahore 21st December 1608, is preceded by a note he wrote in Persian, at the end of the text of the Four Gospels. By an intriguing coincidence, Xavier, possibly obsessed by the mystery of the date of the original, stated that this note signed and sealed by him, was written in the «year of Our Lord 1007», presumably a curious lapse on his part, as he no doubt meant 1607. It does not make sense that Xavier was instead referring to the Hegira, as the year 1007 corresponds to 1598—1599 A. D. when it was known that the colophon was written in Jahanguir's time (1605—1628), and that the original book

referring to this same book, sent with the two copies of it, Xavier wrote: «It is the original and is very ancient, which is at least over three hundred years old and according to another computation very probably over eight hundred».[138] Three days later, Pinheiro also declared that «it had been written over eight hundred years ago».[139] Both may have even guessed that it was possibly the original, in relation to the book written in 828 of our Lord. There is indeed no indication whatsoever in Xavier's and Pinheiro's known correspondence to denote that either of them had been conscious, at any time, that the two ancient copies they had obtained from the Armenian Friar's library were Persian translations of two different versions of the Four Gospels apparently written in Greek and Syriac respectively.[140]

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seems to have reached Pinheiro in Lahore in 1600/1601 during the reign of Akbar. Xavier transcribed this ancient book when he was staying in the city of Lahore between 1606 and 1608, and he must have completed his task in 1607 when he wrote his colophon in Persian. Later, probably when he was about to send this copy to Europe, he added to the last pages his certificate, dated Lahore 21st December 1608, which is a further intriguing point, as in the light of available Jesuit correspondance we found no indication that Xavier was back in Lahore on the 21st December 1608 when he was thought to be in Agra; cf. SANTOS, *op. c.*, 218—219 Jerónimo Xavier and Father Corsi left Lahore on the 10th February 1608 and arrived in Agra on the 18th March. According to Camps, *op. c.*, p. 45, Xavier wrote from Agra to the priests in Goa on the 24th September 1608, and there is no indication of any other letter of his until he wrote to Father Thomas Ituren again from Agra on the 14th September 1609. Nevertheless, there is the certificate signed and dated by him in Lahore on 21st December 1608. Is it then possible that towards the end of the year 1608 Xavier returned to Lahore, where Father António Machado had been left alone following Father Pinheiro's departure to Goa in December 1607? I believe it more likely that Xavier, after having transcribed the book in Lahore in 1607, as is proved by his closing note in Persian, decided to mention the same place in his certificates of the 21st December 1608, though he wrote it in Agra.

138 AHSI, *Goa* 46, I fol. 64: Letter in Spanish dated Lahore, 24 September 1607, from Jerónimo Xavier to Father Claudio Acquaviva, General of the Society of Jesus, Rome. «I do not know if Your Paternity received those which we wrote last year from Lahore and also a book of the Four Gospels in Persian we sent Your Paternity to be presented to His Holiness in the name of the fathers of this mission because it is the original and is very ancient which is at least over three hundred years old and according to other reckonings very probably over eight hundred. Father Francisco Vieira was taking it but as he was stranded we do not know what happened to it».

139 AHSI, *Goa* 46 I fol. 66: Letter from Father Manuel Pinheiro to Father Claudio Acquaviva, (Lahore, 27 September 1607): «And I doubt whether the letters we sent have arrived due to these rebellions. And it would grieve me much because of the Gospel in Persian which we were sending Your Paternity that had been written over eight-hundred odd years ago I got it in Lahore by good fortune as I have written in others». Though CAMPS, *op. c.*, 29—30 n. 4, considered it was unlikely — given the differences of dates — that the said book of the Gospels was the one that had been transferred in 1920 from King's College to the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, I share the opinion of SANTOS, *op. c.*, pp. 281—282, and think that in fact it was the same. However, Santos was mistaken when affirming in 1958 that «This copy is now to be found in the School of Oriental Studies» when it was no longer there.

140 On the 21st December 1607 Xavier sent the Kings of Spain and France a transcription of the Four Gospels in Persian to each of them, which, in the case of the former is known to be a copy of the «828 of Our Lord» original; we have no reason to believe that the one intended for Henri the Fourth was different, though/in his letter of the same date to the General in Rome, Xavier was referring to the latter one as being a transcription of the book he had sent him earlier by Father Francisco Vieira, which as we have seen,

It is presumable — as in the case of the translation made from a Greek version — that the existing copies of the Four Gospels in Persian, translated from Syriac had equally an identical common source.[141]

The manuscript of the Four Gospels printed in Walton's Polyglot has a Persian colophon at the end which has been reproduced in Latin in the Prologue, declaring that the translation was made from a Syriac version by Yuhanna bin-al Kass Yusuf al Yakubi, and transcribed in Caffa at the request of Kwajah Amir bin Sahm-Aldaulah bin Shiràna, surnamed Tiflisi, by Simon bin Yusuf bin Ibrahim al Tabrizi, who completed this copy on the 9th of July 1341 (742 of the Hegira).[142] It also contains another colophon in Persian which has not been printed in the Polyglot, in which the author praises the Syriac idiom, affirming that God communicated with Adam in that language and that «the Arabic derives from the Syriac and the Hebrew, not the Syriac and Hebrew from the Arabic».[143] Yuhanna bin al Kass Yusuf al Yacoubi, who translated this version, would seem to be none other than a christian «Kass» or cleric: probably a Syro-Jacobite or a Nestorian. There is no doubt either that the scribe Simon bin Yusuf bin Ibrahim al Tabrizi, who transcribed the manuscript in Caffa in 1341, and asked those who read and listened to these Gospels to recite «the Lord's Prayer and a Hail Mary for the poor writer», was also a Christian, as was his sponsor Kwajah Amir bin Sahm al Daulah bin Shirrana al Tiflizi, «the friend and brother of the Holy Church of Our Lord». Though Simon's name and that of his ancestors might well indicate that he was a Syro-Jacobite, or a Nestorian, it seems not unlikely that he was an Armenian Tabriz catholic — possibly a Unitor Brother — in spiritual union with the Order of Preachers, who copied the Four Gospels in Persian while he was at Caffa in Crimea, where important Armenian colonies existed since the beginning of the 14th century.[144] Indeed, he may well be Brother Simon of

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was the «718 of the Hegira» original that did not go further than Goa. Text of the above letter in SANTOS *op. c.*, p. 282, cf. also *supra* n. 9.

141 H. HOSTEN S. J., *The Marsden Mss and the Indian Mission Bibliography*, vol. 3 Part I, of the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* B. S. O. A. S. 1923, cf. p. 137. In 1912 Father Hosten found a copy of the Four Gospels in Persian in the Library of the Capucine Fathers in Agra — likely to be the same one referred to by SETH, *op. c.*, p. 79 n. 1. — After detailed study of its contents Hosten reached the conclusion that «it was a copy of the Gospels by Jerónimo Xavier transcribed about 1608 and its Persian translation had been used by Bishop Brian Walton (1600—1661) in his Polyglot Bible printed in 1657». It would seem therefore that Hosten must have had in hand a transcription of the ancient book written in «828 of Our Lord» and that in his opinion the text corresponds to that of the manuscript written in 1341 A. D. in Caffa, published by Walton.

142 WALTON, *op. c.*, Vol. I, *Prologue* p. 102.

143 MESSINA, *Diatessaron Persiano, op. c.*, pp. LXXXV—LXXXVII, gives an Italian translation of this colophon as part of the Persian introduction of the Four Gospels of the Bodleian Library at Oxford (Ms. Pococke 241) which Walton did not reproduce when he printed the manuscript with a Latin version on the side in the Polyglot.

144 The Dominicans came to Caffa in Crimea in 1298, where the importance and influence of the Armenian population of this Genoese colony inhabited by numerous Christians was marked by the possession of two churches in that city in 1316, before it became the See of an Armenian archbishopric later on. The Armenian Catholic group soon appeared in Caffa, and a bishop named Arakiel was converted to catholicism during the pontificate

Tabriz, of the Order of Preachers, who with his companion Francis of Tabriz, was in Barcelona in 1382, «they belong to the Armenian Nation and can aptly speak the idioms of Tartaria, Greece and other nations and confess and preach to the slaves of different nations and instruct them in the Catholic faith and good habits».[145] Another document of the same period refers to them as «Brothers Simon and Francis of Tabriz, ordained monks of the Society of pilgrims (?) . . . who came from the boundaries of the Kingdom of Armenia».[146] Having probably resided in the Armenian convent of St. Nicholas in Caffa would explain their knowledge of the

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of John XXII in 1318. — In 1334 Thadeus, the Armenian bishop of Korykos in Cilicia, was appointed third Latin bishop of Caffa by Pope John XXII. Thadeus was a cleric of the Order of Preachers who finished the translation of the canonical hours of the Divine Office according to the rite of his order in 1343. — Since 1337 the Armenian Catholic priests of the Nakhitchevan province in Greater Armenia already possessed the translation of the Divine Office (breviary and missal) according to the Preachers' rite, following relations established between John (Ohanes) of Quarna and the clerics of his congregation, and the Dominican missionaries. John of Quarna and his companion founded the new order of the Unitor Brothers of St. Gregory the Illuminator, whose members in actual practice were known as «Dominicans». — Numerous convents of this new order were founded in Armenia and Crimea. At the end of the XIVth century the Unitor Brothers already had three convents in Caffa; the most important one was that of Saint Nicolas, already mentioned in 1389 as being the Armeno-Dominican convent of the Unitor Brothers, and the houses of Peter Paul and St. James, in addition to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Crown, founded in 1339 by an Armenian Catholic from Caffa called Arabed (Garabed) by name. Since 1318 there had been a Latin bishop in Tabriz, chosen from among the Dominicans. — At that time the efforts of the Latin missionaries from Persia were particularly aimed at the Armenians as they were almost the only Catholics in Tabriz. Eventually however, this city became one of the most rewarding centers for the Order of the Unitor Brothers, and it was said that a Dominican of Tabriz could only be an Armenian, possibly one also belonging to this Order. At the beginning of the XIVth century, the group of the Dominican residencies with the limits of the Mogol Empire of Persia extended to Mesopotamia, Armenia, Georgia and the central and oriental part of Asia Minor, in addition to Persia itself. Cf. R. LOENERTZ, O. P., *La Société des Frères Pérégrinants. Etude sur l'Orient Dominicain*, Roma 1937. See particularly Ch. III Les missions du Kipçak et des pays de la Mer Noire pp. 89—134, and Chap. IV La mission de Perse pp. 135—198.

[145] L. CAMOS CABRUJA, *Nota Relativa a Esclavos orientales en Barcelona en el Siglo XIV* in *«Sefarad»,* Year VI fasc. 1. Madrid 1946 pp. 128—129, reproduces the original text in catalan of the letter of 10 September 1382, from the Counsellors of the City of Barcelona to an ecclesiastic authority whose name is not mentioned. This letter is in the *«Registre de Lletres closes»* (of October 19, 1391, to 29 April 1393) of the Municipal Archives of the City of Barcelona, fol. 103r.

[146] MADALENA SÁEZ POMÉS. *Exilados de Armenia en los dominios de Pedro IV de Aragon* in *«Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón»*. Sección de Zaragoza — Vol. III Zaragoza 1946, pp. 417—424 cf. p. 423—424 (Separata p. 1—8 cf. p. 7—8). Cf. Document of 2 October 1382 in *Archivo dela Corona de Aragón. Cancilleria.* Register 829 f° LXXXVI v° authenticating the letter, Fernando Pérez Muñoz, Bishop of Huesca (Latin text) Pomés informs us also that according to Antonio RUBIO Y LLUCH. *Documentos per l'historia de la cultura catalana mig. eval.* Barcelona 1908—1921 T. II. p. 264. At the request of Leon V of Armenia (who had arrived on the 19th of March 1383 in Barcelona and had been solemnly received in Tortosa by Pedro IV of Aragon — named the «Ceremonious» — on the 2nd of April, and now on his way to Castille to present his compliments to João I) the same Francis of Tabriz, on the 2nd of May 1383, is recommended by Dom Pedro to the Superior of the Preachers in Mallorca, in order that they be received in the convent as students with all advantages, prerogatives and freedom which the others had.

idioms of Tartaria and Greece, while Armenian, Turkish and Persian would likely be the idioms of other nations an Armenian native of Tabriz would possess. His companion, Francis of Tabriz, may well be identified as the Brother of the Unitors Order, elected by Pope Boniface IX in 1397, Bishop of the Dominican Province of Nakhitchevan, in Greater Armenia,[147] and at the same time, the «Franciscos» mentioned in one of the colophons of the Armenian Bible transcribed in Tabriz in 1401 A. D. by «Fr. Hohannes of the Order of St. Dominic, whose guide and counsellor was the illustrious Vartabed (Doctor) Father Franciscos».[148] It was this same Armenian Friar Hohannes who translated extracts from the description of the resurrection of Christ according to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew into Persian, though using Armenian writing.[149] In another Armenian manuscript written in 1440 there is a Persian translation — in Armenian characters — of «Holy God» and the prayer of «Our Lord».[150]

There is an important Persian manuscript in the Laurenziana Library of Florence, transcribed in the year 954 A. H. = 1547 A. D. by the Syro-Jacobite priest Ibrahim ben Shamãs Abdullah, in the city of Hasan-Kaif; it is a copy of a much earlier original of the «Gospel of the Four Gospels», an evangelical harmony, or Diatessaron, written in Syriac and translated

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147 LOENERTZ, *op. c.*, pp. 159—160. According to OUDENRIJN OP, *Haicanae op. c.*, p. 64. Francisco de Tabriz OP, was appointed by Boniface IX before 29 October 1399. His predecessor Hohannes de Tabriz was elected Bishop of Caffa shortly afterwards. According to ALICHAN, *Sissakan, op. c.*, p. 388, Francisco was nominated bishop of the Province of Nakhitchevan in 1397, but the appointment was not confirmed. TOURNEBIZE, S. J., *Les Frères Uniteurs* in the *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* — Paris 1920—1921 pp. 145—161; 251—279; cf. p. 278 reproduces the same information.

148 L. KHATCHIKIAN — A. MNATZAGANIAN, *Catalogue of the Ancient Manuscripts of the Matenadaran Machdotz* T. I. Erevan 1965 (in Armenian) cf. col. 267 Ms n. 184; one complete Bible transcribed in the years 1400—1401 in Tabriz, by a certain Friar Hohannes Abaraneretsi (a native of Abaraner) of the order of St. Dominic. The Manuscript contains several colophons reproduced by L. KHATCHIKIAN, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts of the XVth Century* (in Armenian) Vol. 1, Erevan 1955, pp. 14—15, among others: fol. 376[a] «This Bible was transcribed by the copyists Hohannes Kahana, the unskilled and sinner, for the delight of Ter Khatchadour, the Kahana who loves God, in memory of his parents and relations», fol. 126[b] «in the name of Christ remember me, fra Hohannes of the Order of Saint Dominic, whose counsellor and guardian was the illustrious vardapet Father Franciscos», fol. 267[a] «In the desert of charity, bent by the weight of his sins, weak of body and with death in his soul, I humble and unskilled scribe Fra Hohannes of the Order of Saint Dominic, first amongst the sinners and last in the Brotherhood do beg to be remembered in your holy prayers written in 1401».

149 H. PAPAZIAN, *A propos de la litterature étrangère en caractères arméniens,* in *Pamper Matenadarani* n. 7. Erevan 1964 (in Armenian with a summary in French). Papazian cf. 220—223, reproduces Persian texts in Armenian characters of extracts describing the resurrection of Christ, according to the Gospels of Mark (fl. 288[a]) and of Matthew (fl. 296[a]) contained in the Armenian Bible, Ms. n. 184, mentioned above (note 148).

150 PAPAZIAN, *op. c.*, p. 216, gives texts and indicates that these two translations are to be found on fls. 144[a] and 144[b] of Manuscript n. 7117, in the Library of the Matenadaran, cf. KHATCHIKIAN — MNATZAGANIAN, *op. c.*, T. II Erevan 1970: cols. 464—465, n. 7117, written by the scribe Hohannes Ardjichetsi in the year 1440. In some early Armenian manuscripts, one can find extracts of prose, and to a certain extent, metrical writings in Persian, beginning from the XIVth century. The oldest complete text is the well-known quatrain of Frik's «divan» cf. ibid.

into Persian, apparently towards the end of the XIIIth century by Iwannis Izz-Eddin.[151] It has a colophon identical to the one in the copy of the Four Gospels written in Caffa in 1341, asserting the supremacy of the Syriac Language over all the others, which points to a similar Syriac primary source.[152]

The Laurenziana Codex which has the «feuille de garde» made of parchment torn from an Armenian manuscript with capital letters, also has a particularly interesting Armenian connotation, inasmuch as it was commissioned by the Armenian Catholicos of Greater Armenia, Stephen V of Salmas, (1541—1564)[153] who offered it to Pietro Paolo Gualtiero, Chronicler and Secretary of Pope Paul III, when he visited Rome in 1548. Why

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151 While in 1943, MESSINA, *Notizia, op. c.*, p. 30 considered that the translation was made between 1260 and 1295, he had second thoughts and in 1951 cf. *Diatessaron Persiano, op. c.*, p. XX he wrote, «one can only affirm that the Persian translation is posterior to 1223 and anterior to the end of the XIIIth century».

152 MESSINA, *Notizia, op. c.*, p. 47; According to him, the author used copiously the Diatessaron of Tatien in his composition of the Harmony of the Gospels but following different directives. For instance, contrary to Tatien who excluded the pericope of the adulterous woman, Ivannis had it reported in the third paragraph Section II of his work. Messina commented that in the separate Gospels this pericope is placed indifferently after John 21, 25 and after Luke 21, 38, but it is not seen the reason why in our Codex it has been placed where it is», cf. *ibid* pp. 41 and 64, also *Diatessaron Persiano, op. c.*, p. 197 n. 3. LYONNET S. J., *op. c.*, pp. 200—201. The author points out that the Persian Diatessaron based on a Syrian original is «notably different of the Arab version (edited by A S. MARMADJI, *Diatessaron de Tatien*, Beirut 1935) either by the order of the pericopes, or by the lessons of detail». In his work LYONNET discusses the possible but controversial existence of a primitive Armenian Diatessaron and cites p. 259 LAZARE OF PHARBI, Tiflis ed. cf. 10, p. 13 to defend that before the Armenian translation of the Gospels «the office of the Church and the lectures of the Scripture were made in the Syriac language in the convents and Churches of the Armenian nation». LYONNET, p. 258 refers equally to CONYBEARE's opinion that «probably the *Vetus Syra* translated in Armenia was glossed from the Diatessaron before it was translated». Ephrem de NISIBE, *Commentaire de l'Evangile concordant ou Diatessaron, traduit du syriaque et de l'Arménien,* Paris, 1966. In the introduction Louis Lenoir, monk of Clairvaux, p. 20 states «Le Diatessaron de Tatien a en outre exercé incontestablement une immense influence, car seul évangile de l'église syriaque durant près de trois siècles, il a marqué de son empreinte toutes versions orientales des évangiles séparés, notamment les vieilles syriaques et les versions arménienne, et géorgienne. Il n'existe aucun exemplaire du Diatessaron arménien ou, du moins, aucun n'a encore été retrouvé; cependant le plus compétent des Pères Méchitariste de Vienne le P. Akinian m'écrivait en 1956 qu'il trouvait des traces de l'influence du Diatessaron à travers toute la littérature arménienne du Ve. siècle et l'enquête du R. P. Lyonnet a abouti à une constatation identique». As regards the Persian Diatessaron, P. Lenoir p. 22 considers that «it differs from both the oriental and occidental traditions of grouping the pericopes of the Diatessaron. It is difficult — he states — to refer to the order of its pericopes for this order seems often to be a disorder; its witness, frequently precious when relating to the meaning of the text, is less useful in the study of the grouping of pericopes».

153 MESSINA, *Notizia, op. c.*, p. 17, reproduces the colophon on Ms. fol. 124, in which «the memory of the glorious christian family of the Patriarch ... Stefano catholicos of the city of Salmas, son of Quli Zargar and of Mahdum Pasha, and his brothers Mihriyar, Shahriyar, Hubiyar and Yulad» is praised.

an Armenian Patriarch chose such a work for that purpose is difficult to guess.[154] It may be that Stephen V was acquainted with the origin and reason of the translation. This Codex is in fact reproducing a Persian colophon from the lost original, which is of the highest importance for the history of the Persian translation of the Bible.[155] In it the translator and scribe, named Iwannis Izz-Eddin, stated that he came from Tabriz, went to Khurassan, Mazanderan, Herat, Tus and Nischapur, where in all these places he found that several Christian communities were settled. These were «Nestorians, Armenians and others», descendants of those of their race who had been deported during the Mongol invasion of their lands. These displaced Christians had brought with them the Gospels and the sacred books in their own language;[156] however, as a result of the distance

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154 Mons. Placido SUKIAS SOMAL, *Quadro della Storia Letteraria di Armenia,* Venezia, 1929 pp. 145—146. According to the Mekhitarist Father, Stephan V, a scholar and expert in Oriental and European languages, is the author of a short explication of the Gospel according to Saint John and of a Preliminary Discourse on the Four Gospels of which there is a Persian version done by himself. SUKIAS SOMAL must have based himself on the description of the said manuscript made by ASSEMANI, *Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae codicum Ms Orientalum Catalogus,* Florentiae 1742, p. 59. However, according to G. MESSINA, *Notizia op. c.*, p. 10 Assemani erred because «Stephen was not the author of the Commentary on the Gospel of St. John, one such commentary thus does not exist but there are instead incorporated in the text commentaries on various matters narrated by the Evangelists».

155 MESSINA, *Notizia op. c.*, pp. 20—21 gives an Italian translation of the colophon in the following terms: «La ragione di scrivere l'Evangelo in lingua persiana fu questa: questo servo debole, misero e la più umile di tutte le creature, a causa delle traversie della vita e degli eventi del giorno e della notte, dalla capitale Tabrīz (che Dio la protegga dalle calamità) capitò nella regione del Horāsān e del Māzandarān e Herāt e Tūš e Nīšāpūr e altre contrade. Comunità di battezzati (imādā dārān) di quelle località (erano) di Nestoriani e Armeni e altri, i cui padri e nonni prima erano stati portati da tutte le regioni al tempo dell'incursione dei Mongoli e stabiliti in quei luoghi nominati. E ciascuno aveva l'Evangelo e i Libri (sacri) nella propria lingua, e nella propria lingua, che avevano appresa dai loro padri ed avi, erano anche periti. Quando essi si unirono a Dio, i figli di essi e il figlio del figlio di essi non sapevano altre eccetto la lingua persiana; e senza quella non è possibile che l'insieme delle tribù cristiane abbiano l'Evangelo e che si legga ad essi nella propria lingua. Poichè a causa della lontananza dalle proprie sedi (originarie) e da quelli i quali parlano la propria lingua, divennero più abili nella lingua persiana che nella loro lingua che in origine avevano; e tutto ciò che gli altri leggono nella lingua originaria, essi (lo) sentono e non sanno ciò che dicono. Domandarono a questo servo debole, che, secondo la sua forza e capacità, in questa vita stretta e sgradevole, in cui io e la maggiore parte del mondo nuotavamo nel mare dell'ignoranza e l'oscurità delle onde di esso era divenuta grande e prevalente, e chi è colui che è puro dai peccati, eccetto Dio Altissimo, che il suo nome sia esaltato ... Nella speranza di scampare dal mare ingannevole feci questa introduzione e scrissi quattro Evangeli in lingua persiana, e alcuni dei commenti di esso: uno, il primo, nel Māzandarān, il secondo in Herāt per i battezzati di quel luogo, uno in Nīšāpūr, in legato al convento dei due Martiri i due Mār Sergi, e uno per mano del più glorioso tra i giovani Amīr Bēg ben (?) Ṭūgāris per il convento dei monaci (muqaddiz) di Spanābād (?) e Ṭūs, e questo è cinque».

156 An Armenian «Evangéliaire» written on parchment before the Xth century, in Khorassan, testifies the presence of Armenians in this country, even before the Mogol invasion. Cf. PAUL PELLIOT, *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie Centrale et d'Extrême Orient.* Paris 1973, p. 143. Citing N. MARR, *Arkaun, mongolskoie nazvanian Khristiae v svyazi*

that separated them from their homelands, the passage of time, as well as the death of those who still spoke their mother tongue, «their sons and the sons of their sons knew no other written language except the Persian, and without it, it was not possible for the Christian tribes to have the Gospels». It was at the request of these Christians that Ivannis Izz-Eddin translated the «Gospel of Gospels» in Persian and made five copies of it, the existence of which is today unknown.[157] The possibility of the translator being an Armenian from Tabriz named «Ohvanes», cannot be put aside without further consideration, the more so, in the light of Messina's own comments, that «the original language of the translator was certainly not Syriac, the errors of translation which are encountered in the text excludes this possibility absolutely».[158] Under the circumstances, it is as plausible as the opinion put forward by the learned Jesuit that the translator was probably a Jacobite without putting aside the possibility of his being a Nestorian.[159] Messina went on to propose that «Ivannis» was not only a layman but a convert from Islam.[160] According to him the declaration made by the translator that: «I and the major part of the world were swimming in the sea of ignorance», is meant to refer to the time when Ivannis was still a Moslem.[161] Such a feeling, would equally — I guess — not be uncommon to express for an oriental christian — Jacobite, Nestorian, Georgian or Armenian — who had just joined the Catholic Church.[162] It is, therefore, not far fetched to assume that the Christian who translated the Diates-

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s voprosom ob Armyanakh — Khalkedonitai Vizantüskh Vremennik t. XII, 1906, fasc. 1—4 cf. p. 49—50. It is also of interest to mention the «Evangéliaire», written in Persian and copied in Djoumada 2nd of 776 of the Hegira (1374 AD) in the city of Samarkand. This manuscript which has Armenian notes in the margin belonged to a cleric named Hanna, son of Moïse of the Abou Tiar family, likely to be a Syro-Jacobite, or a Nestorian. Cf. BLOCHET, *op. c.*, p. 8 n. 12. The route from Samarkand through Bokhara, Merv, Meshed, Nishapur and thence via Sultaniah and Tabriz, to the Black Sea and Constantinople was known as the great Khorassan road. Cf. HAROLD LAMB, *Tamerlane, The Earth Shaker,* London 1929, p. 149.

157 MESSINA, *Notizia, op. c.*, p. 21. The first copy was written in Mazanderan, the second in Herat, for the Christians who lived there, the third in Nishapur to be offered to the two Sargis martyrs convent (apparently the martyrs Sargis and Bacchus), the fourth was written by the young «Amir Beg ben (?) Tugaris» for the convent of Spanabed (ancient name of Meshed [?]) and Tus; and the fifth served as a model for the copy transcribed in Hasan-Kaif in 1547.

158 MESSINA, *Diatessaron Persiano, op. c.*, p. XXIII.

159 MESSINA, *Notizia, op. c.*, p. 47.

160 *Ibid.*, pp. 52—53.

161 *Ibid., ibidem.*

162 TOURNEBIZE, S. J., *op. c.*, p. 320 «Toute la Perse occidentale était bientôt devenue le Champ de l'Apostolat de Barthélémy. Mais l'infatigable missionnaire se préoccupait surtout de ramener à l'église catholique les nombreux Arméniens dissidents disséminés dans ces régions. Il savait que seule l'ignorance retenait la plupart d'entr'eux dans leur isolement; il avait constaté que loin d'être hostile à l'église Romaine, plusieurs manifestaient des dispositions plutôt bienveillantes». Father John Thaddeus O. C. D., in his report of the 3rd January 1619 cf. Carmelites *op. c.*, p. 234 wrote: «As to the Armenians of Julfa, I will tell Your Reverence that I am not keen on sending for them: and it does not seem well for us to do so. The reason on which I base my view is that the

saron for the benefit of his fellow christians «Nestorians, Armenians and others» transplanted in Khorassan in the XIIIth century,[163] was one of those itinerant Oriental Christians, possibly an Armenian newly obedient to the Roman Church, who were numerous in Tabriz in the XIVth century. I did not find in Messina's exhaustive studies on the matter, any determining facts to take for granted his conclusion that the translation was made before the end of the XIIIth century, nor to bar the possibility of contemplating equally, that it was made during the first quarter, or so, of the XIVth century. The Armenian origin of the translator, his possible obedience to the Catholic Church and the assumption that Stephen V was aware of the particular history of the translation of the Diatessaron would seem to make enough sense to justify the otherwise rather strange decision for an Armenian Catholicos to commission, «in memory of his glorious christian family» the transcription of an evangelical harmony translated in Persian from a Syriac model for presentation in Rome on the occasion of his reported profession of faith to Pope Paul III.[164]

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more simple folk among them, in that crass ignorance and good faith in which they live, may easily win salvation; and, as for those who are more instructed, I do not find them so far separated (from us) as some think but, on the contrary, that almost all are staunch in recognizing and confessing the primacy of the Roman Church and the obedience due to the Sovereign Pontiff, which are the principal points; it is true that in their rites and observances they hold to and retain many abuses and errors, born among them more through ignorance and negligence on the part of their own priests and the want of sound teaching, than out of ill-will, and their errors although inveterate, with a little time can be gradually extirpated».

163 Transplantation of Armenians into far distant provinces of the Persian Empire were a recurring event; in 1603/1604 during the war between the Otoman forces and Shah Abbas I, numbers of Armenians were dispersed throughout Persia. At the time Vartabed Stepannos described their suffering thus: «Poor Armenian people, innocent and without advice - Dispersed, hungry, thirsty and naked - On your way to captivity in Khurasan - You endured hundreds and thousands of ills - But you did not set foot out of your sweet country, - Now you are abandoning your father's and mother's graves - And surrendering your houses and churches to others». — STEPANNOS VARTABED, «*Voghb Dzughayetsvots*» in *Bazmavep*, Venice 1847, pp. 94—95. English translation from VARTAN GREGORIAN, The Armenian Community in Iran, 1587—1722 in *ARARAT*, vol. XX, n. 3, Summer 1979, p. 23. Again in 1746, Shah Nadir instigated another forced transplantation of Catholic and other Armenians from Persia to the Kalat-i-Nadir district on the farthest border of Khurassan; also these were «deprived of any spiritual aid» cf. *Carmelites, op. c.*, p. 630.

164 MESSINA, *Notizia, op. c.*, p. 14.

III

Similarly to the events which happened at the court of Akbar in relation to the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Persian, we shall now see what took place in Persia itself during the reign of Shah Abbas the First at the time of his contacts with European missionaries.

Following the wish expressed by the Shah in the audience given to Father Nicolau de Melo in Isfahan in 1599, to have priests in his territory, Dom Frey Aleixo de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, Primate of India and Friar of the Order of St. Augustin, designated Fathers Jerónimo da Cruz, Cristovão do Espirito Santo and António de Gouvea, all of them friars of the same order, to proceed to the Persian court.[165] They left Goa in February 1602 and in September of the same year were received in Meshed by Shah Abbas who in the meanwhile had received a letter from the Viceroy of India, brought over by an Armenian messenger sent ahead on this preparatory mission. The Portuguese Friars, on behalf of Aleixo de Menezes offered the King of Persia a richly bound book depicting the life of Christ, together with some decorated panels. António Gouvea reported that «the Shah looked at the book slowly and asked about some of those mysteries with great curiosity, agreeing with some as if he were well acquainted with them, then he said that he would very much appreciate to see an account of each of those mysteries written on the margin of that book in his language». This task was readily accepted by the Augustinian Friar.[166]

Their Mission accomplished, Gouvea and his companions wrote to the Archbishop of Goa in 1603, informing him that the Persians were glad to have heard about these books because they had knowledge of the Koran only, all other books having been burned in Persia by order of Shah Ismail (1499—1524) the founder of the Safavide Dynasty. They further reported

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165 SENNA FREITAS, *Memórias de Braga,* Vol. III, p. 59: In a letter dated 20th December 1602, Aleixo de Meneses wrote from Goa to the Archbishop of Braga: «Those of the Society very much wanted this embassy (to Persia) because, by the last fleet they received the message, that with the news which has reached Rome of an Ambassador of the Shah going to Rome, they wanted to send Fathers of the Society to deal with this matter but I ordered that this enterprise and the embassy be given to the Order (of St. Augustine)». Indeed in August 1600, on instructions from Pope Clement VIII, the General of the Jesuits, Claudio Acquaviva and the Assistant of Portugal, were ordered then to arrange by all means the Mission to Persia. Cf. CARLOS ALONSO, O. S. A., *Clemente VIII y la Fundación de las misiones católicas en Persia,* in «*La Ciudad de Dios*», Vol. LXXI pp. 196—240 cf. pp. 208—212. On their part the Fathers of the Society were also desirous to be entrusted with this Embassy to Persia and it is to be remembered that Manoutcher, the Persian Ambassador to the Mogol Court, when departing from Agra in 1602 promised the Jesuits that he would see to it that Shah Abbas ask for «Padres» and have churches in his territories; cf. GUERREIRO, *op. c.*, T. I. p. 305. Their pretention was however frustrated by decision taken by the Archbishop of Goa and they had to await until 1653 to then settle down officially in Persia.

166 GOUVEA, *Relaçam, op. c.*, f. 47. Gouvea, f. 38 v stated that a few days before their arrival a Venetian had presented the Shah with a book authored by Frey Luis de Granada, O. P. entitled «Symbolo da Fé» so richly bound that it deserved to be offered to such a great monarch.

that: «formerly there still were many books in the Persian language concerning our Holy Faith and still in the same language there went around many books transcribed from the divine scriptures».[167]

It may therefore be admitted that ancient manuscripts of the two original Persian translations of the Four Gospels and of the Diatessaron must have been among the books destroyed by the «auto-de-fé». The more so that there is no indication that any of those who during the time of Shah Abbas, and thereafter, undertook to translate the Gospel into Persian, had evidenced knowledge or made use of these ancient versions.

It is true however, that when Vecchietti in 1606 met the Augustinian Fathers residing in Isfahan, he must have shown them his copy of 718 AH original which Xavier had offered him while in Agra. Vecchietti had decided to stay in Isfahan to bring to an end the whole transliteration of the Hebrew characters of his Judeo-Persian Manuscripts into Persian script. He had initiated this work, assisted by a Persian christian Shams ad-Din Khandji, with a view to undertake a complete translation of the Bible which he believed would be accomplished in three years. Though it is reported that he had taken a house next to the Residence of the Augustinian Fathers who greatly encouraged him to pursue his work about which he had written to the Pope and to many Cardinals,[168] Vecchietti did not however carry out his formal intents, leaving Isfahan after a very short stay.

We have to wait almost a Decade to hear of a new attempt to translate the Gospels into Persian when a group of four brothers and priests of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, appointed by Pope Clement VIII, went to Persia; these religious, two Spaniards, respectively John Thaddeus of St. Elisaeus (later Bishop of Isfahan) and Vincent of St. Francis, Paul Simon of Jesus Mary, a Genoese (the senior of all Carmelite missionaries to the East) and brother John of the Assumption from Umbria, left Rome in 1604 but only arrived to Isfahan at the end of 1607 and were received by the Shah in January 1608 together with an Armenian interpreter. They brought his Majesty the following presents: «A very luxurious book of the Holy Gospels and a magnificent copy of Euclid in the Arabic language from cardinal San Giorgio. A volume richly bound in silver of the History of the Old Testament with precious miniatures, a curious and valuable copy from the Cardinal of Cracow, Bernard Maciejowski».[169] The Carme-

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[167] GOUVEA, *Jornada, op. c.*, f. 147.

[168] MORELLI, *op. c.*, p. 175; FISCHEL, *op. c.*, pp. 15 and 17. There is no indication whatsoever that the Portuguese Friars made any transcription of Vecchietti's copy of the Four Gospels, nor do we hear either of them having later undertaken any Persian translation of the Gospels themselves, in spite of its obvious usefulness in their religious debates with Shah Abbas. The risks of infringing both Rule IV of the Roman Index, or more particularly, Rule II of the Index pro-Regnis Lusitanae (*supra* n. 83 and 84) must have weighed heavily in their minds.

[169] FLORENCIO DEL NIÑO JESUS C. D. *Biblioteca Carmelitano-Teresiana de Misiones*, Pamplona 1929—1930, T. II, *A Persia*, pp. 116. On p. 58 Florencio reproduces a letter from Fr. Vincent of St. Francis written from Poland to Rome on the 20th November 1604, in which he reported that the Cardinal (of Cracow) gave them: «a book in parchment in large folio, with four images on each page which they fill with gold illustrations 'martillo' and ancient colours of the Sacred History, from the first chapter of the Genesis till the second Book of Kings: which was a rare and old thing of great value and it

lites reported thereafter that the Shah opened the book of the Old Testament by chance on the page where Saint Michael is seen brandishing his sword, with the dragon vanquished and humiliated at his feet. Shah Abbas asked who was the one lying at the feet of the angel and being told by Father Paul Simon that «*This is the fallen angel we call the devil*», the King laughingly said «*No, this is the Turk*». After having seen the book, Shah Abbas entrusted «a molla to write in Persian all that each page contained and what signified the miniatures and that to do this with the greatest exactitude and fidelity he should consult the carmelite missionaries».[170]

During the first three years, from 1608 to 1611, the Carmelites «learned the Armenian, Persian, Arabic and Turkish languages and sent to Rome many books to be printed so that they would be useful to the oriental christians that spoke these languages . . . Every day they gave lessons of the christian doctrine in the Persian and Armenian language. On festive days, especially on Sundays, Fr. John explained the gospel of the day in Persian. During Lent, he read and explained in a brief questionnaire on the manner to confession and this was composed by Father John in the Persian language».[171]

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seemed to him that in his name we should offer to the King of Persia». Among the presents offered to Shah Abbas there was a small barrel of «acqua vita» (vodka?) of Moscovia, which the King highly esteemed; *idem,* p. 117. CARMELITES, *op. c.* p. 279: The Prior Fr. Prosper mentions in a letter dated 23rd September 1623 that during the Presidency in Shiraz of Fr. Dimas (1623—1625) Imam Quli Khan requested that there should be procured from Rome, Texts of Plato and Aristotle in Greek and Latin as well as Arabic-Latin dictionaries and the Bible in Arabic for the use of the University of Shiraz.

[170] FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, p. 117. FISCHEL, *op. c.*, p. 27, note 72 remarks: «It is surprising to find in these illustrations of the Old Testament explanations not only in the original Latin and Persian translations as has been ordered by Shah Abbas, but also a Hebrew transliteration of the Persian text on the margin of each miniature, evidently added by, and for the convenience of a Jew of the Persian idiom, or by order of the Shah, or by his own initiative when he took possession of this manuscript». The manuscript came to Europe, via Cairo, to London where it was on sale in 1844 and later, in 1916, was bought by the J. Pierpont Morgan Library of New York. For further details cf. S. C. COCKERELL, *Old Testament Miniatures. A Mediaeval Picture Book with 283 paintings from The Creation to the Story of David*, New York. Cf. also TADEUS MANKOWSKI, *Orient W. Polskiej Kulturze Artystycznej — Wroclaw-Kraków* — 1959, pp. 229—230.

[171] FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, T. III, pp. 70—71.

[172] GULBENKIAN, *op. c.*, p. 58; SENNA FREITAS, *op. c.*, pp. 79—80. In his letter dated 2nd February 1604, Aleixo de Meneses advises the Archbishop of Braga that he has in his hands, the Obedience to the Roman Church given by «the schismatic Patriarch of Armenia», to send to the Pope. Aleixo de Meneses rather candidly added that «as the Armenians have among them many errors and some reproved rites, it will be much important that he goes himself to Isfahan to make them a Synode, as he did at Diamper for the Christians of Malabar». Aleixo de Meneses however, could not leave Goa, and in his stead he again sent António de Gouvea. This ephemeral obedience gave Shah Abbas the opportunity to try and confront Carmelites and Augustinians. In a verbal note to His Holiness the Pope relating to the year 1608, Fr. Paul Simon reported that Shah Abbas had put him two questions, «firstly, whether Your Holiness had ordered the Augustinian Fathers to change the faith of the Armenians which for more than 1000 years they had kept, and to make them into Portuguese. I made answer that Your Holiness had not given orders for it because the ancient faith of the Armenians was the

They exercised their ministry principally amongst the Armenians and Jacobites, creating some rivalry with the Portuguese religious of Saint Augustine who in Isfahan in the year 1606, had obtained the ephemeral favour of the Armenian Patriarch David IV, to put himself under the obedience of the Sovereign Pontiff.[172]

In June 1608 the Carmelites were joined in Isfahan by Fr. Redempt of the Cross, an Aragonese who stayed in Persia until 1615 before proceeding to Goa. It is not unlikely that they heard of Jeronimo Xavier's Persian works on the Holy Scriptures through the numerous letters Fr. Redempt exchanged with the Jesuit Father, while the latter was staying in Lahore (1608–1615).[173] According to a contemporary source, Xavier's work, The Truth Revealing Mirror, completed in 1609 was sent by Jahangir to Shah Abbas and it is a fact that it was shown by the Carmelite Fathers to a moslem called Ahmad ibn Zain al-Abidin who, in 1622/23 wrote an apology to defend his religion against Xavier's attacks. Al-Abidin's writings deserved an answer by the Franciscan Father Philip Guadagnoli which was published in Rome in 1631 under the title *Apologia pro Christiana Religione*.[174] The traveller Pietro della Valle, when he was in Persia in 1619 having heard of or seen copies made in Isfahan of some of the works of the Jesuits, wrote equally to the Fathers of the Company, in Agra, requesting them to send him some correct copy of the Persian books they had composed which he wanted to have printed in Rome. When travelling in India while in Cambaya, having obtained confirmation that his letter had been duly received by the Jesuits, Della Valle wrote again on the 7th March 1623 reminding them to send him to Goa — where he was going — the books he had asked for.[175]

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same as our own neither did Your Holiness desire it to be changed: that Your Holiness would feel displeasure at the annoyance caused to His Majesty over that, even though it was not the fault of the Augustinian Fathers, who had never had any intention that the Armenians should change their faith that the Armenians had not understood them ... Secondly, he inquired from me if the Portuguese Fathers tell me one thing, and your Fathers who are remaining here (i. e. the Carmelites) tell me another, which of them am I to believe? I answered that I hoped to God the Augustinian Fathers and our own would never disagree; but in case it should happen his Majesty has perspicacity and would know from the letters which one and the other group has brought him, and should act accordingly». Cf. Carmelites, *op. c.*, p. 129.

[173] FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, T. IV, pp. 68—69; about Fr. Redempt of the Cross, cf. *Carmelites, op. c.*, pp. 1000—1002.

[174] ROBIN WATERFIELD, *Christians in Persia, Assyrians, Armenians, Roman Catholics and Protestants*, London 1973, pp. 62—63; CAMPS, *op. c.*, pp. 175—177.

[175] *Les fameux Voyages de Pietro della Valle*, Paris, Vol. IV (1665) p. 105. Letter from Surat, 22nd March 1623. Whether the Jesuits did send him copies of their works or not, or whether Della Valle had obtained some from the Carmelites during his stay in Persia (1617—1622) or later, is not clear, but it is a fact that at the Vatican Library there are two manuscripts which belonged to him and are related to the Jesuits in Lahore. One is the «Christian Doctrine of Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino, translated into Persian by the Jesuit Fathers in Lahore, dated 7 Ramadan 1029 AH = 1620» cf. ROSSI, *op. c.*, p. 30, *Vat. Pers.* n. 5; the other *Vat. Pers.* n. 6, being a «Persian-Tuscan vocabulary of all words contained in that Christian Doctrine, which in the past years in Lahore was written in Persian by the Jesuits Fathers. The public utility curiosity of this language put together by the students of the College of Saint Peter and Saint Paul which in that city of Isfahan, capital and rule of all the Persian Empire, has been

In 1611, the King sent Father John Thaddeus on an important embassy to the Tzar of Muscovy, the King of Poland and the Pope.[176] While on the way, the Governor of Astrakan who mistrusted John Thaddeus' mission, had him arrested and he remained captive during three years and only returned to his convent in Isfahan at Whitsuntide in the year 1614. The following March, on the 21st., John Thaddeus visited Shah Abbas who at the time was in the Mazanderan, at Farahabad, near the Caspian sea. In his tent, and in the presence of his Captains, John Thaddeus asked the Shah to allow him to speak about the Gospel and when the king permitted him to do so «he made an exhortation, explaining the Ten Commandments in Persian verses that he himself had composed. This pleased the Shah so greatly that he ordered that the verses be written».[177]

In a letter which John Thaddeus wrote on March 26th 1616, to Father Benignus, sub-prior of Isfahan, who was in Rome at the time, he stated: «I am composing several texts in the Persian language, translating into it the Christian Doctrine, the Gospel, the Psalms of David and to these last mentioned I have dedicated special efforts because for that translation I had to employ three Persian mollas and a Jewish rabbi born in Persia; the latter interprets from the Hebrew text which I correct with the Latin, the two Persians write it down. I have taken the preface of these psalms from Saint Augustine».[178] In a manuscript copy of the Persian translation of the

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erected by the Fathers of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites». That copies were made in Isfahan can be seen from ROSSI, *op. c.*, p. 70, who mentions among the books brought over to Rome by John Thaddeus: «a Persian Doctrine made by Jerónimo Xavier and a Dictionary of all the words found in this Doctrine». *Idem* p. 75, *Vat. Pers.* 48, copy made in Isfahan in the year 1 . . 6 (XI century AH) cf. «The Life of Christ», composed in 1602 by Jerónimo Xavier, translated in Persian by Abd-us Sattar ibn Qasim Lahori.

[176] *CARMELITES*, p. 194—197. Instead of sending an Armenian as first intended, Shah Abbas wished Father John Thaddeus to proceed to the two Christian Rulers and the Pope, and propose to them the diversion, via Russia and Poland, of the valuable trade to Europe in Persian carpets and silk and other goods from the route across the Turkish dominions, with a view to deprive the Turkish Government and its trading population of the funds and capital derived from Persian sources. The Shah arranged for servants and guides with an Armenian interpreter named Jacob, to accompany John Thaddeus and an Armenian trader named Lucas was put in charge of expenditure and transport during the Journey. The Carmelite Father was also accompanied by an Armenian Catholic, or Uniat priest Khwajeh Shevelin, whose project was to establish a College for young Armenians in Rome; cf. *Idem*, p. 96 and 191. The latter is the same one referred to by John Thaddeus in his letter of 14. 5. 1609, «who with all his Christian folk, 250 households had received him in a visit he paid to Julfa». John Thaddeus reported (*Idem*, p. 191) that «Khajeh Shevelin wishes to purchase from the Sheik of Hurmuz in the island of Quism two or three leagues of land, in order to make place for the settlement of Armenians and Syrians: when that is done, our Order will make a foundation in the place in question, and a convent be purchased, the Church of which would have three naves for the Latins, Armenians and Syrians. This proposal Fr. Vincent was to discuss with the Sheikh of Hurmuz». As to Jacob, the Armenian interpreter, he must be the same who acted in a similar capacity in 1618 on behalf of Pietro della Valle. Cf. Travels, *op. c.*, pp. 324—325; supra, n. 111.

[177] CARMELITES, *op. c.*, p. 230 cf. letter from John Thaddeus to the Praepositus General in Rome, dated 12th February 1616.

[178] *Idem*, p. 231. The lack of Armenian collaborators in the translation of the Psalms, and the Holy Scriptures, may possibly be explained by the incidents of October 1613 that

Psalms dated 1618, which belonged to the Carmelite Convent of Saint Paul in the Quirinal, the author «Padre Juan» — as Father John Thaddeus was known — stated that he was ordered by the Navab (the title of Shah Abbas) to translate the Gospels and the Psalms on the 11th April 1616.[179]

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dramatically affected the relations between Julfa Armenians and the European missionaries, when António Gouvea arrived in Isfahan bearing the title of «Visitor of the Armenian Church». Shah Abbas was not at all pleased with this new title and showed his displeasure by issuing a royal decree forbidding the Armenians to visit both houses and churches of the Augustines and Carmelites. (cf. *idem*, pp. 202—208.) This lead the European religious and the Bishop of Cyrene, António Gouvea, to consider whether they should abandon the country or not, as they did not wish to impair the position of the Armenians and so give the Shah motive for thinking that in mollesting the Armenians he could exercise pressure on the Pope, even if by doing so he were retarding the union that the Holy See was so anxious to obtain. The religious decided to depart from Isfahan and the Augustinians evacuated the city on the 19th October 1613 and went to Baghdad, whilst the Carmelites left a layman called Diogo looking after the convent. According to FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, Vol. III, p. 100, the Carmelite Missionaries and the Augustinian Fathers «came to the conclusion, after all, that their stay in the country was already not only unfruitful, if not even noxious to the interest of Christianism. Unfruitful because no moslem converted himself, nor were there hopes of this; nor the Armenians were giving up their Schism, nor from the King one had to expect a good thing, having signed the peace with the Turk». As for Fr. Redempt, he left Ormuz at the beginning of 1614, but on the way he met Father Leander of the Annunciation, a Spaniard from Burgos who was coming from Ormuz with instructions to re-open the convent of the Carmelites in Isfahan. This decision had been taken by a Council of the King's officers, with the Bishop of Cyrene and religious of the two Orders, who thought it was not advisable to abandon the convents in Persia. However, and in spite of the reopening of the convents, prudent reserve was maintained by the European missionaries, as can be gathered from a letter written by John Thaddeus on the 26th May 1616, who on mentioning that repairs were being effected in the convent, stated: «All these races of Gentiles and moors are working on them gladly, I did not wish to employ Armenians until Kawjeh Nazar and Kawjeh Safar ask me insistently to employ them also in the constructions».

[179] ROSSI, *op. c.*, pp. 72—73. This manuscript is now found at the Vatican Library: *Vat. Pers.* 42, see fls. 3 v—4. This is apparently the same as the copy of the Psalms in the Vienna Collection; cf. Gustav FLUGEL, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Hofbibliothek zu Wien,* 3 vols., Wien 1865—1867, Vol. III, p. n° 1550 which states that «in the Preface it is said that a Missionary Father (1 Persian word) on the 11th April 1616 at the beginning of the Rabbi II — 1025 AH, on order of a certain gentleman probably a Frenchman brought back the translation from Georgia to send to Louis XIV». It is followed by the Translation of the Four Gospels which Flugel thinks was made by a Frenchman. Another copy of the Psalms of David, with indication of «Padre Juan» and the year 1616, is found in Munich cf. JOSEPH AUMER, *Die Persischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek*, München — 1866 p. 132, Ms n. 339. It is interesting to note that at the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, cf. E. BLOCHET, *op. c.*, Vol. IV, p. 7, n. 8, there is another copy of the Four Gospels in Persian. This translation «without preface or author's name was made straight from the Greek text (fol. 136 v) it was written for Louis XIII (of France) in the year 1616, by a French missionary that came back from Georgia». In the light of the indications contained in the copy *Vat. Pers. 42* at the Vatican Library, it seems likely that the (various) above mentioned translations of the Psalms and Gospels were copies made from John Thaddeus' own translation. Also found at Oxford cf. SACHAU and ETHE, *op. c.*, p. 1050 n. 1827: «a Persian translation made by a Portuguese Friar, Padre Juan, AD 1616, First of the Rabbi II = AH 1025». It was copied on the month of Sha'bên AH 1028 = AD 1619 July/August. In the same Library also Ms n. 1828, this copy of the Psalms was presented to the Oxford University by Thomas Roe, ambassador of King James at the court of the Emperor Jahangir,

What happened next has been a subject of controversial interpretation in the light of contradictory contemporary reports. John Thaddeus in his Relation to the Propaganda Fide, in 1630, writing about himself — as always in the third person — reported: «Father John translated the psalms and Gospels in the Persian language and offered them to the King who has received them with the utmost satisfaction».[180] Curiously enough, however, in an earlier long letter-report dated 3rd January 1619, John Thaddeus explained that the previous year he had gone to Qazwin, where on the 18th of June he presented Shah Abbas with «the book of Psalms translated by me in Persian together with the Gospels in Arabic which were received by the King with the greatest pleasure and the most profound reverence ... With the said books I offered the King the alphabet in Arabic and told him of the printing of Arabic and Persian writing all of which interested him greatly and he expressed the wish to introduce this in his country. If we can have one and introduce it here it would be of great advantage to our Religion and its propagation, the Shah has even charged me to procure it».[181] Pietro della Valle, who had arrived in Qazwin a few days before this event,[182] stated that when Father John was summonded to bring the Psalms which he translated into Persian, he brought in addition a New Testament printed in Arabesque characters with an Arabic alphabet of the print of Remond and the models of all letters. Having examined all those things the King showed great interest in having a printing press with Persian and Arabic characters in Persia and even commissioned Father John to obtain one for him from Rome.[183]

The Castillian Ambassador Don Garcia de Figueroa relating his own audience with Shah Abbas in Qazwin on the 18th June, wrote that it coincided with the visit of John Thaddeus whose purpose «had been to bring to the King the Psalms of David, and the New Testament written in the Persian language and very well bound in two volumes».[184] The matter is

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after his return to England on January I, 1619—1620. Walton considered John Thaddeus' translation of the Psalms, as well as the one by the Jesuits in Agra, «not careful» cf. MACLAGAN, *op. c.*, p. 255.

180 FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, V. III, p. 112, n. 2 refers to *Relazione della missione dei Carmelitani Scalzi in Persia del Padre Giovanni Taddeo di St° Eliseo fatta per li ministri della S. Congregazione de Propaganda Fide. Viaggo dei Missionarii carmelitani in Persia e il loro ingresso e habitacione presa* (1630) cf. *Revista de la Exposición Misional de Barcelona* num. IV, January 1929 p. 186.

181 CARMELITES, *op. c.*, p. 233.

182 DELLA VALLE, Vol. II, p. 392, letter from Qazwin dated 25th July 1618, the very day Shah Abbas left that city to go to Sultanieh, cf. *Idem* vol. III, p. 444. In a further letter written from Isfahan on the 22nd April 1619, cf. *Idem* p. 424 Della Valle mentions the arrival on the 19th June 1618 of Father John who had the honour of making reverence to the Shah that same evening. When the Shah, showing friendliness, told him that he had deferred too long to come and see him, Father John excused himself explaining that he had spent all his time translating into Persian the Psalms of David which His Majesty had ordered him to undertake, and having completed it, he was bringing it to him.

183 DELLA VALLE, p. 440 letter from Isfahan dated 22. 4. 1619 further completed 8. 5. 1619.

184 FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, Vol. III p. 112 quoting «*Commentários de D. Garcia da Silva y Figueroa, de la embajada que de parte del Rey de España don Felippe III bizo a el Rey Xa Abbas de Persia*». Madrid 1905, T. II, p. 101, English translation from *Carmelites.*

further complicated by an anonymous report written in the same year by a missionary, member of the ambassador's retinue, who had been an eye-witness of the occasion and referred only to the presentation of a book of the Psalms in the Persian tongue.[185] It is clear, however, that John Thaddeus translated the Psalms and the Gospels into Persian, and I believe that he did offer both of them to Shah Abbas in 1618, as he reported it in 1630 in his Relation to the Propaganda Fide.[186] It seems to me that the Carmelite Father could not have presented the King with the Gospels printed in Arabic, in substitution of the Persian translation the latter had ordered simultaneously with the Psalms in 1616, the more so that Shah Abbas already possessed a manuscript Gospel written in Arabic, which had been offered to him by Cardinal San Giorgio and presented by John Thaddeus and his Carmelite companions on their arrival to Persia in 1608.[187] The Gospels printed in that same language must have been given in addition to the Persian translation of both Psalms and the Gospels to arouse the King's

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op. c., p. 241. It is further specified that Father Thaddeus had not up till then been able to give the two books to Shah Abbas «although he had endeavoured to do so through the intermediary of Husain Baig (the first Persian Ambassador to the Pope and the Christian Kings) and the Secretary of State Aga Mir ...» Figueroa goes on to describe the Shah opening the books «kissing them with as much an appearance of devotion as if he were the most devout and penitent Capuchin in Europe, even shedding tears. But this, which to all those who do not know the inner self of this King, might appear an act to be applauded and praised, the ambassador judged him (Abbas) to be a thing in every way detestable disclosing by it a character full of deceitfulness and evil pretence».

185 CARMELITES, *op. c.*, p. 240 gives an English text based on a Spanish original from FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, T. III, p. 111 citing «*Relación breve de la embajada y presente que la Magestad del Rey don Philipe 3° nuestro Senhor Rey de la españas y emperador del nuevo mundo hiço a Xa Abbas, Rei da Persia clariss° la qual embajada dió don Garcia da Silva Y Figueroa su embajador dignissimo*». The anonymous chronicler reported, «That Shah Abbas had John Thaddeus summoned, asking that he brought a book, which was that of the Psalms in Persian language. And there the said Father presented him the book, in front of the Ambassador, and the King kissed it and put and held it over his head saying that he greatly prized it and whoever did not believe what was written therein, was an infidel and insulted God». He went on saying: «Afterwards I heard the ambassador and the Father remarked that a Christian very well instructed could not say the things that he (the Shah) then said in favour of our Faith and that either he (Abbas I) was a most deceitful man in the world, or else a man whom God had predestinated to become a Christian».

186 In the light of the same data Florencio del Niño Jesus, General Archivist in Rome of the Carmelite Order, did not hesitate to declare that John Thaddeus offered Shah Abbas «the book of the Psalms and that of the Gospels which he had translated into Persian» cf. *op. c.*, Vol. III, p. 111, while Fishel *op. c.*, pp. 28—29, came to the opposite conclusion considering that John Thaddeus only presented the book of the Psalms in Persian, it being — he stated — «the first and only Persian translation of the Bible made during his reign».

187 The Cardinal Cinthio Aldobrandini, Cardinal of San Giorgio (1592—1610), a nephew of the Pope, had apparently made available to the Carmelite Missionaries three manuscript volumes of the Gospels in Arabic for presentation to Shah Abbas and other Moslem princes. In his letter to the King of Persia, handed over at the same time by the Carmelite Fathers, Cardinal Cinthio must have asked for certain books in Persian as in January 1609 before leaving for Rome, Father Paul Simon was given «some (five) of the books which the Cardinal of San Giorgio had asked for in that language». Paul Simon was told that Shah Abbas, regretting not having been able to let Cardinal Cinthio have all the books he has wished to obtain, but finding them later, His Majesty

interest — which in fact it did — to have a printing press in Persia where such books could be printed not only in Arabic, but particularly in Persian.

I guess that soon after this event John Thaddeus realized, or was reminded, that by giving the King a non-official Persian translation of the Gospels he might have run the risk of infringing the Roman Index Rules. Possibly confronted with the same dilemma as Jerónimo Xavier, John Thaddeus must have thought it more prudent to abstain henceforward from referring to it and until 1630 only mention his presentations to Shah Abbas of the non-controversial Arabic version of the Gospels printed at the Vatican and of his own Persian translation of the Psalms.[188] The next occasion we read about a further Persian translation of the Gospels is in 1622, when Halifa Pulũs, apparently a Christian — possibly an Armenian Catholic — wrote a «Treaty on the Doctrine of Christianism» composed in Persian by order of Shah Abbas, at the end of which the author expressed the hope of undertaking such a task.[189]

Shah Abbas I passed away on January 1629 and a year or so later, during the reign of Shah Safi (1629—1642) we hear that the Portuguese Carmelite, Balthassar de Azevedo (Balthazar of Saint Mary) — who already in 1628 was teaching Persian in Isfahan to the newly arrived Capuchin missionaries and sending Persian Mss. books to Europe — «had taken up an enterprise very difficult to execute successfully, i. e. the translation into the Persian language of the Holy Gospels».[190] Fr. Balthazar must not have carried through his project, because after a long interval, when Shah Abbas II was ruling (1642—1666), Fr. Stephen of Jesus wrote from Isfahan in 1650: «I have deputed Fr. Balthazar of St. Mary with the help

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would send them through the Carmelites who were staying in Persia, cf. FLORENCIO, *op. c.*, Vol. II, pp. 129 and 134.

188 Basing himself on the manuscript series *Scritture Riferite* in the archives of the Propaganda Fide, vol. 209 (109?) P. AMBROSIUS a S. TERESA, *Bibliographia missionaria Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum,* Rome 1941 p. 61 referring to the manuscripts (some 23 in number) brought back in 1628 by John Thaddeus for the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide, his own Order and Mission mentions among them «The Gospels in Persian language divided in four volumes, the Psalter of David in Persian . . . » The author of the *Carmelites in Persia*, on the authority of the same list, refers on p. 294 n. 3 to «a) translation of the Gospels in Persian, without mentioning the author, while in b) he cites John Thaddeus' own translation of the Psalms», and on page 933 it is mentioned again «the Psalms in Persian by the same priest . . . » while he does not indicate the authorship of «The Gospels in Persian divided into Four Books».

189 ROSSI, *op. c.*, p. 77, *Vat. Pers.* 49. Halifa Pūlūs states at the beginning of his work that he did not know the Persian and Turkish languages, and though well advanced in age (60) he learned Persian and offered this treaty, followed by the Catholic Credo, to Shah Abbas after the conquest of Qandahar (1031 AH = 1622).

190 CARMELITES, *op. c.*, pp. 807—808: Balthazar of Saint Mary wrote a Christian religious Predication in Persian dated 1045 AH (1636 AD), which is now deposited at the Vatican Library; cf. ROSSI, *op. c.*, pp. 82—83, *VAT. PERS.* 57 «Conciones diversae Patris N. Balthasari di Santa Maria in Persica». According to Rossi, citing P. AMBROSIUS A. S. TERESA, *op. c.*, pp. 64—65, P. Balthazar is likely to be the author of *Vat. Pers.* n. 6: «Persian-Tuscan vocabulary, of all the words contained in the Christian doctrine which in the past years, in Lahor by the work of the Jesuit Fathers was written in Persian». John Thaddeus brought back to Italy in 1628 a copy of the same; cf. Carmelites *op. c.*, p. 933. BLOCHET, *op. c.*, n. 1038 and 1039 two identical copies in the National Library of Paris with the title «Vocabulario Persian et Toscano».

of Fr. Peter of the Mother of God to translate the Holy Gospels into Persian». The result of their prolonged efforts may well be the translation made by a Carmelite monk named «Padre Pedro», now found at the Lindisiana Library, in Manchester.[101]

We have to await the reigns of Shah Sulayman I (1666—1694), and Shah Husein (1694—1722), to hear of further endeavours to translate the Holy Scriptures into Persian. The translator, an Armenian priest called Hovhannes Merkouz, also known as Hovhannes of Julfa, who died in 1715, has left one manuscript of the Four Gospels written in Persian in Armenian characters, belonging to the British Episcopal Seminary of Calcutta (Bishop's College).[102] Hovhannes Merkouz had apparently translated not only the Gospels, but the entire New Testament. However, the manuscript of the remining parts (the Work of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul, the Revelation of John) has not yet been traced. It seems that he has also translated various parts of the Old Testament, in collaboration with Hovsep Djoughayetsi.[103] We are also told of a parallel translation in Persian and Arabic of the New Testament made — but never saw the print, by the same Hovhannes.[104] There is to be found at the Institute of Manu-

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101 EARL OF CRAWFORD, *Lindisiana Library, Hand-List of Oriental Mss Arabic, Persian, Turkish*, 1898 cf. p. 171, n. 337. CARMELITES, *op. c.*, p. 974: Peter of the Mother of God (family name François du Jardin) a Flemish, also made a translation into Persian of St. Thomas Aquina's *Contra Gentes*.

102 ANASSIAN, *op. c.*, Vol. II, col. 539 citing *Askasser* (in Armenian) 1845, n. 12, p. 95. KHATCHATOUR ABEGHA DJOUGHAYETZI, *History of Persians* (in Armenian) Vagharshabad 1905, p. 213 and 263—264, also HOVSEP DJOUGHAYETZI's Knnigon (in Armenian) Vol. II, ch. 26 (State Matenadaran of Erivan, Ms n. 1793, pp. 82—85 a). REV. HENRY MARTYN, B. D. *Memoir*, 3rd Ed. London 1819, p. 444, while in Julfa in 1812 Martyn was shown by the Armenian Bishop Matteus «a copy of the Gospels, Armenian and Persian, done by Joannes the late Bishop there, who he says was a good scholar and wrote on the Divinity of Christ». At Martyn's request Bishop Matteus brought what he had of the Holy Scriptures in Persian and Arabic. They were WHEELOCKE's Persian Gospels (supra n. 128) and an Arabic version printed in Rome.

103 KHATCHATOUR, *op. c.*, p. 219.

104 LEON ARPEE, *op. c.*, p. 251. According to this Author, *op. c.*, p. 235, Hovhannes «decorated the inside walls of the Julfa Armenian conventual Church with scenes from the Bible». MESROB SETH, *op. c.*, pp. 601—602: «Thanks to his profound knowledge of theology and also of the Persian and Arabic languages, the saintly and learned Hovhannes, earned the title of the *Theologian of Kings*. He was the author of different works on theology of great merit written in Armenian, and he also left several valuable works — originals and translations — in Persian and Arabic, on theology and the christian religion». According to SETH, at the British Episcopal Seminary of Calcutta (Bishop's College) there is another manuscript in which the pages are written in Armenian and Persian alternately, transcribed in 1724, being an account by the same Armenian monk, Hovhannes from Julfa, regarding a controversy on the Truths of the Christian Religion which took place between himself and Shah Sulayman I. This manuscript was the first publication printed by the Armenian press in Calcutta in 1792, and was afterwards offered to the College by the printer, the Armenian priest Joseph Stephen. The Library of the Vatican cf. ROSSI, *op. c.*, pp. 78—80: *Vat. Pers.* 52, has a manuscript dated 1688 being an exposition of the Christian Doctrine in Persian, written by order of the King, by Ohannes (?) Halifa, who may well be the same Armenian monk. «Khalifeh» (Halifa, Khalifah) is how the Persian style a Christian Religious Superior, or Bishop, to this day, cf. CARMELITES, *op. c.*, p. 195. In the Oxford Bodleian Library

scripts of Tiblissi in the S. S. R. of Georgia, a manuscript of a Persian translation from the Arabic version of the Gospels copied in Isfahan in 1108 AH (1698 AD) by order of Shah Soultan Hussein.[105] Still, during his reign in the first quarter of the XVIIIth century another Persian translation of the Four Gospels — in Armenian script — started in 1717 in Shamaki is completed three years later in Tiblissi by an Armenian physician from Julfa called Hakim Yaghoub Laghab Barbidjan, son of Issaghoul.[106] It is under Nadir Shah (1736–1747) that an oecumenical attempt is made to translate the Holy Scriptures in Persia. After his victorious return from India in 1740, the King issued a royal decree ordering a literal translation of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospels and the Koran into Persian. For this task Nadir Shah appointed his court historian Mirza Mahdi,[107] who was helped by two other learned Persians, Mir Muhammad Ma'sum al Husaini al Khatuna-Badi and his son Abdul Ghani. Mirza Mahdi and his collaborators started their task in Isfahan where they sought the assistance of four learned Jews, eight Christians and four

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there is another treatise written in Persian by an Armenian priest, compiled in 1123 AH = 1711 AD and dedicated to Shah Sultan Hussein (1694—1722) with the purpose of giving succint account of the Christian religions as practised by the Roman Catholics of Armenia «their forms of worship, their prayers etc ...» Cf. SACHAU-ETHE, *op. c.*, n. 1825. His assumption that the Armenian priest «had turned Mohammadan», is subject to doubt. This Treatise was written during a period of fierce struggle in Persia between European religious orders, backed by the Armenian Catholics and the Church leaders of the Armenian community of Julfa, who tried to get support from the Shah for their cause. There is also another copy of the same work at the British Museum transcribed in 1814 AD giving at the end the date 1690 AD as the year of its completion and «Avanus Khalifah» (Ovhannes) as the name of the author. Cf. CHARLES RIEU, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols. London 1879—1883, Vol. 1, 5 Add. 23583. Nothing is said of the name or country of the royal personage by whose orders the work was written. The texts are given in Arabic and mostly accompanied by an interlinear Persian version. Though RIEU considers that «the Author was apparently a Catholic and his frequent use of the second plural in Biblical passages where God or a single individual is addressed, would seem to betray a French origin», I would be inclined to think that the author was also the same Avanus (Ovhannes) of Julfa.

105 I owe this information to Professor Papazian who kindly assured me that this manuscript is in the *Oriental Fund* of the Institute of Manuscripts in Tiblissi, in the S. S. R. of Georgia, *Ms* PK. 55/60.

106 ANASSIAN, *op. c.*, col. 539, Ms n. 8492 of the Matenadaran, Erevan. Four Gospels with pages missing. *Idem* n. 3044, this is the same as above, but not so defectious, it was transcribed in 1780 by Ter Mikael Markoreyan of Asdabad, who wrote it in the city of Gandja, capital of the Province of Chirvan. Another manuscript n. 619, pp. 94b—96b contains unrelated short extracts from the Four Gospels in Persian with Armenian characters. It has been written during the 17th and 18th centuries and the translator is unknown.

107 KHATCHATUR DJOUGHAYETSI, *op. c.*, pp. 263—264. According to the above historian — who lived in the XVIIIth century — the Old and New Testament «were translated by illustrious Latin and Armenian theologists under the supervision of a certain Mirza Metni who being a learned and wise man embraced the true religion of Christ our Lord ... Thus, reborn to the true faith, unknown to his followers, he was secretly baptised by the learned theologist Der Kevork, Primate of Julfa Monastery». (Bishop Kevork was appointed Primate in 1754 and died on 28th October 1768), cf. Y. TER YOVHANIANTZ, *History of New Julfa in Isfahan* (in Armenian) New Julfa 1880, Vol. II, p. 61.

Muslims. They began in May 1740 and only finished a year later in June 1741. For the description of what happened during this lapse of time, we quote abundantly from the Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia.

Bishop Philip Mary says in his letter of the 4th November 1740 to the Sacred Congregation in Rome, that «I was forced to go and help with the Persian translation that the King had ordered to be made of the Holy Gospels, the Psalms, the Pentateuch and the Prophecy of Isaiah together with some other missionaries of different orders existing in Isfahan ... Armenian bishops and religious also participated in the translation of the Gospels which is taken from the Arabic version of the Vulgate that they also accept, not in reality due to a spirit of obedience, or respect towards the Holy Church, but to avoid discrepencies between their Armenian version and our Vulgate. It is now five months since I began to take part in this and it is not known when it will end. We are now at the beginning of the Gospel of St. John».[108]

In the same letter the Bishop asked for the payment of a debt of 420 scudi, 240 of which represented the cost of the translation of the Gospels and the Scriptures. It seems that in this case, the Congregation very ex-

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[108] CARMELITES, *op. c.*, pp. 634; Fr. Urban of St. Elisaeus also gave a detailed account to Fr. Leander of Santa Cecilia who used it in his book: *Persia: ovvero Secondo Viaggo in Oriente,* Roma 1757, part of which translated in English, cf. CARMELITES *op. c.*, p. 636: «The Persian Mullas were enjoined to translate the Quran from the Arabic, although, according to the law laid down by Muhammad, any such translation was prohibited ... The Jewish Rabbis were ordered to translate the Old Testament; the Armenians, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of the Apostles and the Apocalypse. Lastly, the Catholic missionaries were bidden to translate the Four Gospels. He has the edict for this published in Isfahan where in the palace of the Khan (i. e. Governor or daruga) all had to busy themselves with this work: and they took almost an entire year to complete it. The translators of the Gospels were Monsignor Philip Mary, Bishop of Isfahan, Fr. Urban of S. Elisaeus, Vicar Provincial in that country ... Fr. Thomas Aquinas, all three of them Discalsed Carmelites, but the last named died while the version was still being made: and Fr. Raymond Berselli of the Preachers Order, the Father Superior of the Jesuits, having been unable to take part as he had had an apopletic seizure». There is another account by Father Desvignes, a Jesuit missionary, cf. *Lettres Edifiantes, op. c.*, Vol. I, p. 443: letter to Father Roger, Procurator of the Missions of the Levant: «Le roi voulait une traduction persane des livres de Moïse, des Psaumes de David et de l'Evangile. Il envoya à Isfahan un mollah, ou docteur de loi, qu'il chargea de rassembler les Juifs, les Arméniens et les Francs qu'il jugerait nécessaires pour ce travail. Le mollah, homme d'esprit, confia aux Juifs les livres de l'Ancien Testament; aux Arméniens et aux Francs, ceux du Nouveau. La traduction fut commencé chez le mollah, dès le mois de mai 1740. Nous nous trouvions chez lui ordinairement deux missionnaires et deux Arméniens catholiques; deux moines et deux prêtres arméniens schismatiques. Tous les mots étaient examinés; on cherchait le vrai sens, et les termes les plus propres pour les exprimer. La diversité des sentiments faisait souvent naître diverses explications. L'endroit ou Jesus-Christ donne la proéminence à Saint Pierre, fut, entre autres, vivement discuté. Les schismatiques pretendaient que ces paroles: Tu es Petrus, etc. signifiaient que quiconque confesserait que Jésus est fils de Dieu, participerait aux éminentes prérogatives qu'avait méritées à Saint Pierre cette glorieuse concession. Le mollah fut si étonné de cette explication, qu'il demanda de lui-même au père du Han (Père Supérieur des Jésuites), si les Francs donnaient le même sens à ces paroles. Le père du Han lui expliqua le sens catholique, qu'il trouva si naturel, qu'il imposa silence aux schismatiques. Nous eûmes la consolation de voir que dans presque toute ces contestations, ce mahométan, guidé par la seule raison, décida en faveur des explications catholiques qui lui paroissaient parfaitement conformes au sens naturel de la lettre».

ceptionally granted this request, nevertheless a prudent reserve was maintained in respect of this translation, as one may gather from the summary of the minute of the Session that took place on the 10th July 1741, which says: «The Congregation considered the need to send an extraordinary remittance of 420 scudi under caption of urgent needs of the mission, without any mention of the amount that was paid towards the mentioned translation so that no official agreement is given until it is duly examined. This must be considered as a matter of the utmost importance because it was ordered by a prince who is at present the conqueror of Persia and the terror of Asia and one must presume that it is his intention to force all Christians of whatever religion or sect spread over these vast regions to follow the one and only religious law (Catholic, Scismatic Armenians, Nestorians also called Chaldeans, Georgians all follow the Greek rite and the christians of St. John, thus called because they accepted St. John the Baptist as the author of their beliefs and rites): and as the Schismatic Armenians are mostly rich and powerful should they predispose the monarch in their favour, the catholic religion would become oppressed, whilst, if the contrary happened the latter would be more firmly established and propagate itself were God willing to assist this good cause with His omnipotence».[199]

Some months later all these participants: Mullas, Rabbis and Catholic and Armenian ecclesiastical leaders were called to Qazwin to present their translations. It was reported that Catholics and Armenians were particularly hopeful, in view of a rumour that Nadir Shah was considering to become a Christian.[200] There is no narrative from Bishop Philip Mary of what took place during the audience of the King, but we owe again to Fr. Leander of S. Cecilia a well known description of it, worth reproducing: «When the day appointed for the audience arrived, they were all together conducted to the gate of the garden and there made to halt, they saw to their horror every now and then to behold that enter the gate men of all sorts who were led before the Shah with halters round their necks and there strangled to be afterwards dragged out like animals and their corpses thrown out into the fields for the wild beast to eat. This spectacle lasted almost an hour during which eighteen were strangled. The Persian translators trembled and so did the Jews, the Armenians showed some courage in their looks; but our Fathers were beyond measure delighted hoping to have attained the crown of martyrdom so much desired by them ... They were informed that the time had come for them to enter; and our missionaries were, in fact, placed the first in order the Persian mollas following, next the Jews and last the Armenians, each of them having in the hands of their principal representative the translation in question of these books ... The Sovereign then inquired from them whether they had finished their respective translations and they answered that they had completed them and brought them. Having received the translations without glancing at these, he caused them to be asked whether they had been well lodged and when they replied in the affirmative he dismissed them, saying that he would

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[199] CARMELITES, *op. c.*, pp. 634—636 and pp. 986—987.
[200] *Idem*, pp. 637 and 986—987.

notify them when he wished them to return — although were never afterwards summoned —. But he had 100 Tomans given them to divide among themselves. The division of the money was made in proportion to the numbers of translators our missionaries, three in numbers and received 15 Tomans ... the Jews who were four received 20 Tomans, the Armenian who were five received 25, and the Persian Mullas, who were eight received 40».[201] Fr. Desvignes S. J. writing from Julfa, Isfahan, on the 26th May 1744 emphasised: «Since that time we have heard no more of that work, and every effort of ours to obtain at least one copy of it have been in vain: so ended all out hopes».[202]

[201] *Idem*, p. 637—638 and 987—988.

[202] *Lettres Edifiantes*. Vol. I, pp. 443—444. After having mentioned that the work of translations lasted six months Father Desvignes added: «Quand il fut fini, le roi, qui était pour lors a soixante lieues d'Ispahan, ordonna qu'on lui apportât cette traduction, et que ceux qui y avaient travaillé vinssent le trouver. Monseigneur notre évêque et deux missionnaires partirent avec le mollah de la part des catholiques. Les Arméniens députèrent quatre évêques. Le roi les reçut avec bonté, les logea, et remboursa les frais de leur voyage. Mais quand on lui présenta la traduction, il dit qu'il n'avait pas le temps de l'examiner; que d'ailleurs, comme il n'y avait qu'un Dieu, il ne pouvait y avoir qu'un prophète. Ces paroles attristèrent nos missionnaires, qui avaient conçu de cette traduction des idées avantageuses à la religion». JOHAN HANWAY, *The Revolutions of Persia ... with the history of the celebrated usurper Nadir Kouli from his birth in 1687 till his death in 1747*. Vol. II, London 3rd ed. 1762, Part XV, p. 404. As a Protestant Hanway reported the same event in a different way: «Towards the close of this year 1740 he (Nadir Shah) caused a translation of the four evangelists to be made into PERSIC. It seemed however, from the manner in which he conducted this business, to be more the effect of caprice, than of any steady and confident plan. The affair was put under the direction of MYRZA MEHTIE, a man of some learning, who being vested with a proper authority for the purpose, summoned several ARMENIAN bishops and priests, together with divers missionaries of the ROMISH church and PERSIAN MULLAHS to meet him at ISFAHAN. As to the latter, they could not be gainers; since the change, if any took place, was to be in prejudice of MAHOMMEDANISM. Besides, NADIR's conduct towards them had been severe to an extreme, and unprecedented; many of them therefore gave MYRZA MEHTIE large bribes to excuse their appearance. Among the christians summoned on this occasion, only one ROMISH priest, born in PERSIA, was a sufficent master of the language, to enter upon a work of so critical a nature. As to the ARMENIANS, tho' they are born subjects to PERSIA, and intermixed with the inhabitants, yet there are very few of them who understand the language fundamentally. It was natural to expect that MIRZA MEHTIE and the PERSIAN MULLAHS would be more solicitous how to please NADIR, and support the credit of MAHOMMEDANISM, than to divest themselves of prejudices, and become masters of so important a subject. This translation was dressed up with all the glosses which the fables and perplexities of the khoran could warrant; their chief guide was an ancient ARABIC and PERSIAN translation. Father DES VIGNES, a FRENCH missionary, was also employed in this work, in which he made use of the vulgate edition. They were but six months in completing this translation, and transcribing fair copies of it. In May following 1741, MYRZA MEHTIE, with the PERSIAN MULLAHS, and some of the christian priests, set out from ISFAHAN for the PERSIAN court, which was then held in the encampment near TEHERAN. NADIR received them with some marks of civility, and had a cursory view of the performance. Some part of it was read to him; on which occasion he made several ludicrous remarks on the mysterious part of the christian religion; at the same time he laughed at the JEWS, and turned MAHOMMED and ALI equally into ridicule. Under such circumstances, it was impossible this performance should produce any good effect. He observed that the evangelists did not agree in their accounts, more than the MAHOMMEDAN and christian priests; therefore he must remain under the same difficulty that he was in before; that out of both, if it pleased God to give him health, he would engage to make a religion much

Later on, in a letter to the Cardinal Prefect, dated from Isfahan 28th April 1746, Bishop Philip Mary describing his impressions on his journey to Tabriz and Tiflis, in Georgia, in the year 1745 stated: «I had the fortune to find again the book of the translation of the Holy Gospels done in Isfahan: as I informed Your Eminence, the Persian translator had refused to give me the copy saying he would not give it to me without orders from the reigning monarch. I have had one copy made of it and now here in Isfahan I am having a second made so that in accordance with instructions of the Sacred Congregation the book may reach Rome, and that whether I bring it with me or send it by another opportunity, should one copy be lost, the other copy will always remain and I am having it done by one of the scribes who were of the number of these translators and although I have written that the translators of the Holy Gospel were Persian, all the same I repeat once more that it was neither I nor the missionary Father who made the translation, but Persians alone from the Arabic text of the Vulgate with the constant help however of the Armenians as well as of myself with some other missionary Fathers».[203] One of these copies did reach Rome and is found at the Vatican Library; it was transcribed and terminated in the month of raǵab 1159 AH (July-August 1746). Stuck inside there is a folio dated 4th November 1741 in which Fr. Philip Mary warns the Propaganda Fide that the translation contained in this codex was made «from the Arabic text translated from our Vulgate» by Persians from Isfahan, assisted by Missionaries and Armenian Fathers, only «for the clarification of some passages, confrontation of the text of the Scriptures and of the difficult words».[204] As Bishop Philip Mary died

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better than any which had been yet practised by mankind; with several other vague reflections of the like nature. He then dismissed these churchmen and translators with some small presents, not equal in value to the expense of their journey». Sir John MALCOLM, *Histoire de la Perse*, Paris 1821, vol. III, cf. XVII, pp. 150 refers to the same story basing himself on HANWAY's *relation* which led the author of the *Carmelites in Persia, op. c.*, p. 635 n. 1 to declare that «Sir J. Malcolm's tale is not substantiated and quite distorted. There was no breaking up of the assembly, no ludicrous remarks passed in the presence of the delegates. Further the Bishop expressly contradicted that Catholic priests actually wrote the version: that was done by Mahommadan Persian scribes. It was not a translation from the Latin, or a European language direct into vernacular Persian, but from an Arabic translation of the Vulgate rendered by Persian munshis (who may have been imperfectly acquainted with Arabic), as explained verbally by the Armenian and Latin missionaries. None of the parties would have been linguistic or Biblical scholars. The contemporary (1741) reserve and caution of the Roman Curia in regard to the production shows that it was not regarded as having any authority». According to the Rev. CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN, *op. c.*, p. 187, «the version of the Gospels prepared by command of Nadir Shah, is probably the same with that which is sometimes found in the hands of the Armenian priests in India. A copy was lately shown to an Oriental scholar (Rev. H. Martyn) in Bengal, who observed that «if this was the same, he did not wonder at Nadir's contempt of it».

[203] CARMELITES, *op. c.*, p. 638 n. 1, on p. 988 the author gives a slightly different English translating of the letter.

[204] ROSSI, *op. c.*, pp. 172—173: *Borgiani Pers.* Ms n. 18. In the introduction fol. 1, it is said that the order to translate the Gospel was given by Nadir Shah to Mohammed Mahdi Aqili. Muhammed Másum al Husaini al Hatunabadi, his son Mir Abd-ul-Gani, the Isfahan Fathers and others collaborated in this work. BLOCHET, *op. c.*, p. 6, n. 7, another transcription of same made in 1746 by the R. F. Lagarde, missionary of the Province of Guilan.

in Isfahan in 1749 without having made his proposed visit to Rome it is possible that the above mentioned copy at the Vatican Library, is the one referred to by David Sheriman, the Armenian Count from Leghorn. On the 29th of January 1748 the latter notified the Cardinal Prefect that Arachiel, son of Paul (also an Armenian) who had been travelling from Isfahan to Smyrna, had sent him a book from this last city containing the translation of the Holy Gospels in the Persian language for the late Cardinal Petra. David Sheriman was asking the Cardinal Prefect to instruct him how to let him have the book in question.[205] In all circumstances it is again of edifying interest to see that Bishop Philip Mary, very likely for the same reasons as Xavier and John Thaddeus, was at a loss to stress that the Carmelites and his fellow missionaries had nothing to do with the translation. It is equally strange that neither Philip Mary, nor any other Carmelites, ever mentioned or referred to the existence in their archives in Persia of John Thaddeus' earlier translation made in 1616—1618, though it must have been transcribed and originally used in their religious debates with Persians and in their evangelical mission with local christians.[206]

Therefore it is not surprising, after all, that any of these early translations made by Roman Catholic missionaries remained unpublished. Free from similar inhibitions, it was mainly given to the Anglican and American Protestant missionary movements of the XIXth century, very active in

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[205] *Idem*, p. 638 n. 1, citing that David Shariman's letter is found in the *Scritture Non Riferite* (S. N. R.) V. p. 223 in the archives of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. The author of CARMELITES says that the book was dated Isfahan 20. 9. 1745 and that «it would be interesting to trace what afterwards became of it». Count David Shariman was the son of Michael Shariman, one of the five Sarrat-Shariman brothers, eminent members of the Armenian Catholic community of Julfa/Isfahan. In 1699 Michael and his brother Markar had become moslems to try — unsuccessfully — to avoid paying an enormous amount to another Armenian named Philip de Zagly. On the Shariman family cf. CARMELITES, p. 1359 and R. GULBENKIAN, *Philippe de Zagly, marchand arménien de Julfa,* in *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* — Nouvelle Série T. VII, Paris, cf. pp. 364—368. As regards Arachiel, son of Paulo, he is the Armenian trader born in Julfa, Isfahan, who in 1749 embellished the Armenian Church of Amsterdam at his own expense, cf. MACLER, *Mission en Belgique etc. op. c.,* p. 490. Also D. MAXWELL WHITE, *Zaccaria Seriman, The viaggi di Enrico Wanton,* Manchester University Press 1961, pp. 3—20, The Shariman Family.

[206] The Latin missionaries had to admit — though reluctantly — that their secular activities among the Persian themselves were fruitless. In this connection it is worth recording the opinion of P. GABRIEL DE CHINON, *Relations nouvelles,* ou *Traités de la Religion du Gouvernement et des coutumes des Perses, des Arméniens et des Gaules du Levant.* Lyon 1671, pp. 182—183 «En vérité, je ne crois pas qu'il y ait dans tout le monde de peuple plus difficile à convertir que les Persans ... n'ajoutant aucune foi ni aux anciennes Ecritures, ni au nouveau Testament ... La raison qu'ils donnent pour improuver ainsi toutes les Saintes Ecritures est que ce qui est contenu dans l'Alcoran étant contraire à ce qui est écrit dans l'Evangile et dans le vieux Testament; ils disent que tant les Ecritures des Juifs, que celles des Chrétiens ont été falsifiées; et qu'il ne reste de vérité que ce qui est conforme à leur Alcoran. Après cela qu'on se mette en peine de leur porter des Bibles, ils n'en font non plus d'état que de chansons et ne traitent de saint que leur profane Alcoran, qu'ils mettent au rang de la parole de Dieu, et infaillible dans les vérités qu'il contient.» Father Gabriel resided during twenty years in the convent of the Capuchins in Ispahan and also in Tabriz before being sent to Malabar, where he died on the 27th June 1678. He knew the Persian, Turkish and Armenian languages.

India and Persia, to take the relay, in providing new translations and achieving numerous editions of the Gospels, as well as the publication of the whole Bible in Persian.

In the College of Fort-William, founded in Bengal in May 1800, there was a department for translating the Scriptures into the Oriental languages where in 1805 Matthew's Gospel was printed after having been translated there in Persian by Mirza Muhammed Fitrat of Benares, a Persian by descent, under the supervision of Colonel R. H. Colebrook, a professor of sanscrit at the College.[207] Two years later, appears on the scene Henry Martyn, a member of the Church Missionary Society, who in the space of five years translated the New Testament in Hindoustani and left to posterity the same Holy Book in the Persian language, as well as the four Gospels in the peculiar tongue of the Persian Jews.[208] The version of the New Testament prepared by Nathaniel Sabat, an Arab educated in Baghdad, was completed in 1810 under the supervision of Martyn. It was found however, in need of considerable revision and polishing, and to do so, Martyn decided to go to Persia.[209] In June 1811 he arrived at Shiraz, where, after conferring with scholars, Martyn came to the conclusion that an entirely new translation was required. He immediately set to his task and with the help of a Persian, Myrza Seid Ali, he finished it by February of the following year. Martyn had several copies made, two of them richly executed, one for the Ruler of Persia, Fateh Ali Shah (1798—1836) and the other for his heir Prince Abbas. Copies were ready in May 1812, Martyn decided to bring them personally to the Shah in Tabriz where he arrived on the 7th July, ill at the point of death. The British Ambassador, Sir Gore Ouseley took good care of him, but Martyn, being still too ill to go and see the Shah, the Ambassador went in his stead to present the New Testament himself. By a royal letter of thanks Fateh Shah commented that «it has been translated in a style most befitting sacred books, that it is an easy and simple diction ... The whole New Testament is completed in a most excellent manner a source of pleasure to our enlightened and august mind.»[210] Sir Gore Ouseley had extra copies made for offering to Persian dignitaries and he took two with him. On his way to England he passed

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[207] CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN, *op. c.*, pp. 2—3, DARLOW & MOULE, *op. c.*, p. 1202, n. 7322.

[208] JESSE PAGE, *Henry Martyn, his life and labours, Cambridge, India, Persia*, London, w. d. p. vi.

[209] CONSTANCE PADWICK, *Henry Martyn Confessor of the Faith*, London 1922, pp. 240 to 241. The Armenians of Calcutta wrote a commendation of him to their brethren in Persia and «a list of places in Mesopotamia etc., where there were Christians and the number of them», *idem* p. 248: Sir John Malcolm who had twice been sent on embassies to Persia, wrote also to the British Ambassador in that country, Sir Gore Ouseley, to tell him that Martyn's intentions were «I believe, to go to Shiraz, Isfahan and Kermanshah to Baghdad, and to endeavour on that route to discover some ancient copies of the Gospel, which he and many other saints are persuaded lie hid in the mountains of Persia. Mr. Martyn also expects to improve himself as an Oriental scholar; he is already an excellent one». R. WATERFIELD, *op. c.*, p. 92. Martyn settled down with his faithful Armenian servant Zachary, in the house of a wealthy merchant Jaffar Ali Khan, to whom Malcolm had given him an introduction.

[210] PADWICK, *op. c.*, p. 285.

through St. Petersbourg where he put one copy at the disposal of the Russian Bible Society, that had it published in 1814 and 1815, thus being the first to print this famous translation of the New Testament into Persian.[211] Its sister edition was only published at Calcutta in 1816,[212] though before leaving Shiraz for Tabriz in May 1812, Martyn had sent to his friends at Serampore, four copies of the New Testament together with Mirza Seid Ali so that he might see it through the Press.[213] Before his work was even published in St. Petersbourg, a version of the Four Gospels in Persian prepared by Leopold Sebastiani, who had formerly been the head of the Roman Catholic Missions in Persia and Kandakar, was printed at Serampore in 1812, but the sheets being destroyed in a fire at the press it was reprinted the following year at Calcutta under the care of the translator.[214]

The United Association Synod of Scotland published at Edinburgh in 1846, the first translation of the whole Bible in Persian. It was the work of William Glen, a member of the Scottish Missionary Society in Astrakan, where he had started it in 1830.[215] Later on, Robert Bruce of the Presbyterian Mission, who came to Persia in 1869, while in Julfa undertook a new version of the Old and revision of Martyn's New Testament. His first help came in 1874, from the Armenian Carapet Ohannes, a native of that city. Once Bruce had completed his Text, it was examined by Prof. E. H. Palmer before being published in England in 1881.[216] In the meanwhile in Persia, from 1878, «Colporteurs» attached to the British Foreign Bible Society (B. F. B. S.) to spread the Gospel in Iran, started their mission under the leadership of Benjamin Badal, being — according to Robin Waterfield «One outstanding example of a class of men — mainly Armenians — who in the face of constant persecution and opposition, travelled all over the country selling and distributing Bibles and Gospels».[217] In 1895 Bruce's complete revision of the Persian Bible was printed for the B. F. B. S. in Leipzig. More recently, the Diatessaron in Persian, transcribed in 1547 by the Syro-Jacobite priest Ibrahim ben Shamas, was — as we have seen — edited in Rome in 1951 together with an Italian translation made by Father Medina. This Diatessaron was reprinted in 1957 in Shiraz and published again in Teheran, translated by the Reverend Edwin H. Jaeger, who in 1976, with the collaboration of S. I Ishaq and M. Abhan, verted the New Testament in today's Persian version.[218]

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[211] WATERFIELD, *op. c.*, pp. 93—94. DARLOW & MOULE, *op. c.*, 1203 n. 7325.

[212] *Ibidem*, n. 7326.

[213] PADWICK, *op. c.*, pp. 276—277 n. 1.

[214] DARLOW & MOULE, *op. c.*, p. 1203, n. 7324.

[215] WATERFIELD, *op. c.*, pp. 179—180.

[216] *Idem*, pp. 148—150 and 180.

[217] *Idem*, pp. 180—181. In 1891 the English Missionary Society also organised an efficient team of «colporteurs» with the Armenians Aga Mackertich in Julfa, and Yacoub Galustian in Baghdad. Under the Bible colportage many hundreds of thousands of Bibles, Testaments have been distributed over the years. When Waterfield wrote his book in 1972 the Bible colportage in Persia was still going on under the control of the Armenian Aga Tatavoos Michaelian and a new generation of colporteurs.

[218] Data I gathered from the handwritten additions to the Catalogue of the British Foreign Bible Society's Library in London. Rev. Jaeger's most recent translation containing a short preface and inter-Gospel references is found in the above Library under n. 514 F

If there is one specific conclusion to be drawn from this long compilation of facts, it is the emergence, unexpected by its importance, of the contribution of the Armenians — through the centuries — to the rendering of the Holy Scriptures into Persian, and above all to their propagation and diffusion.[210] Whenever free to do so, the Armenians have of course been using the Bible verted into their own language in the Vth century, first from a Syriac original then translated again from the Greek text of the Septuagint.[220] Since then in Armenia a succession of interpreters unvariably translated from Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Georgian, Palhavi, Persian and even, though exceptionally, from the Latin.[221]

In difficult times, during certain periods of their dramatic history and in order to preserve their christian identity, they have been forced to use the Four Gospels translated into Arabic, Turkish or Persian.[222] As we have seen, descendants of Armenians deported to Khorassan during the Mongol Invasion, had to use a Harmony of the Gospels translated into Persian in the XIIIth–XIVth century because they «knew no other written language except the Persian, and without it, it was not possible for the Christian tribes to have the Gospel».[223]

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76. WATERFIELD *op. c.*, p. 84, when writing in 1972 mentioned a new Persian version of the Gospels to be published by an Italian Catholic priest of the Salesian Order, Father Natale del Mistro, resident in Persia since 1938 and now teaching at the Don Bosco College in Teheran. However, in the *Index Bibliographicus Biblicus*, published annually by the Pontifical Biblical Institute, there is no reference to a Persian translation of the Gospels from 1973 to 1976. I am grateful to Father Joseph Costelloe S. J. for the above information.

219 J. A. FABRICIUS, *Salutaris lux evangelii toti orbi per divinam gratiam exoriens, sive notitia historico-chronologica literaria et geographica propagatorum per totum orbem Christianorum* ... Hamburg 1731 cf. p. 651: «the Armenian Christians will be eminently qualified for the office of extending the knowledge of Christianity throughout the nations of Asia»; BUCHANAN, *op. c.*, pp. 254—255 citing and considering this statement undoubtedly true, observed: Next to the Jews, the Armenians form the most generally useful body of Christian Missionaries. They are to be found in every principal city of Asia; they are the general merchants of the East and are in a state of constant motion from Canton to Constantinople. They are settled in all the principal places of India, where they arrived many centuries before the English. Wherever they colonize, they build Churches and observe the solemnities of the Christian religion in a decorous manner. Their Ecclesiastical Establishment in Hindustan is more respectable than that of the English. Like us they have three churches in the three capitals, one at Calcutta, one at Madras and one at Bombay, but they have also Churches in the interior of the Country, in Bengal alone they have Churches at Dacca, Cydabad and Chinsurah».

220 SIRARPIE DER NERSESSIAN, *The Armenians*, Thames & Hudson 1969, p. 86.

221 PAUL PEETERS, *Erudits et Polyglottes d'Autrefois* in *Recherches d'Histoire et de Philologie Orientales*, T. II Bruxelles 1951, p. 20; also, *Traductions et traducteurs dans l'Hagiographie Byzantine*, Bruxelles 1950 pp. 165—218 (traducteurs Arméniens) cf. Ch. V, pp. 188—198; VARTABED KAREKIN SARKISSIAN, *A Brief Introduction to Armenian Litterature*, London 1960.

222 BUCHANAN, *op. c.*, p. 203 mentions the conversion of an Arab in Afganistan, after reading the Bible in Arabic belonging to «a christian from Armenia, then residing at Cabul» and adding that the Armenian Christians in Persia have among them a few copies of the Arabic Bible. On the other hand the Protestant missionary Rev. Joseph Wolf, in 1832 while in Caboul ministered the Armenians and relates in his Diary that he preached to them in Persian in their Church, cf. SETH *op. c.*, p. 208.

223 *Supra* n. 155; in the *History of Armenia*, written in Armenian in about 1241 by Kirakos of Gandzak, captured by the Mongols, there are listed some 60 Mongol words in Arme-

It is equally possible to suppose that Oriental Christian clerics: Nestorians, Jacobites or Armenians, may have translated the Four Gospels into Persian during the Mongol invasion which began in 1220. If indeed they did so – and we have no such evidence from the scarce data available – for the benefit of the Mongol conquerors it is more likely that the translation was carried out from a Syriac original, by Nestorian priests, during the forty years from 1256, the date of Hülegu's arrival in Persia, and 1295 when Ghazan (1295–1304) was converted to Islam and the Mongols of Iran after a period of vacillation became Moslems rather than Christians.[224] Yabhallâhâ III, a Mongolian monk who ruled the Nestorian Church (1281–1317) under seven Mongol Kings, had unsuccessfully cherished the hope that the western Mongols would be evangelized and would join forces with the Christians of Europe against Islam. In 1304 Yabhallâhâ sent to Rome from Maragheh a profession of catholic faith and recognition of the Primacy of the Pope through a Dominican returning to Italy, but his desire

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nian writing: starting with the word «God» and ending with «Satanas». Cf. LOUIS LIGETI, *Le Lexique Mongol de Kirakos de Gandzak*, Budapest 1965 in Acta Orient. Hung. Tomus XVIII, 1965 pp. 241—297; for the History of Armenia cf. critical edition in Armenian by K. A. MELIK-OHANJANYAN, *Kirakos Gandzakec'i:* Patmut'yun Hayoć (subtitle in Russian: Girakos Gandzakeci: Istorija Armenü) Yerevan 1961.

224 New Catholic Encyclopedia; *Nestorian Church*, by JOSEPH COSTELLOE S. J. pp. 343 to 347; *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods,* edited by J. A. BOYLE, Cambridge 1968, ch. 4: Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans; ch. 7: Religion under the Mongols; PELLIOT, *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie Centrale et d'Extrême-Orient.* Paris 1973; LOUIS DE BACKER, *l'Extrême Orient au Moyen Age*, Paris 1877, cf. *Relation of Hayton, Prince d'Arménie,* pp. 125—255: this Relation written in 1307 was first printed in 1529. Nestorian Christianity was widespread among high dignitaries at the Court and especially among the wives of the Great Khans and of the Il-Khans family; one of the sons of Chingiz-Khan (1206—1227) married a Christian princess of the Kereit and she became the mother of his two most famous grandsons, Qubilai, Great Khan (1260—1294) and Hülegü, Il-Khan of Persia (1256—1265). The latter's chief wife, the Kereit princess Doquz Khatun and to whose influence is to be largely attributed Hülegü's benevolent attitude towards the Christians, was a christian of Chaldean rite. In his camp Hülegü had an Oratory where «Armenians, Georgians and Syrians celebrate freely the Holy Offices» cf. HUC, *op. c.*, p. 281. The mother of the Great Khan Mongke (1257—1258) and several of his wives were all christians as were many other women, including Abaqa's wife Maria, known as Despoina Khatun, who was an illegitimate daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Michael III. Ghazan (Il-Khan 1295—1304) is reported to have married a daughter of the Armenian King, cf. HUC *op. c.*, p. 350. These women, including Ghazan's Armenian wife, often had their children baptized and at least two Il-Khans, Ahmad Tegüder (1281—1284) and Oljeitu (1304—1316), were christians in their childhood, the former having assumed the name of Nicholas cf. HAYTON, p. 195. We are told by HAYTON, *op. c.*, p. 180 that Mongke was baptized by an Armenian bishop who had accompanied King Hetum I in his visit to Qaraqorum between 1253 and 1256. Arghun (1284—1291) also favoured the Christians and sent four embassies to the West, he reconstructed many churches which had been destroyed by Ahmad Tegüder; he always repeated he would only be baptized on the capture of Jerusalem. The coins of Arghun and his father Abaga bore the Cross and Christian legends; cf. F. NAU, *L'Expansion Nestorienne en Asie,* Conférences au Musée Guimet T. XL p. 274 n. 2; *The History of Yaballaha III, Nestorian Patriarch and of his Vicar Bar Sauma,* translated from the Syriac and annotated by JAMES A. MONTGOMERY, New York 1966, p. 17 n. 6. Baidu (1295) is reported by HAYTON *op. c.*, p. 139 to have been a «good christian» who had the churches of the Christians re-built».

for reunion was frustrated by the Nestorian clergy who checked the efforts of the Latin missionaries to bring it about.[225]

It seems also fair to assume that from the early period of the Roman Catholic activities in Persia in the XIVth century, the Armenian Catholic Friars of the Miabanolq Congregation, or «Fratres Unitores» and later Armenian Dominicans, have equally contributed to the propagation of the Holy Scriptures in Persian. Whether one of them translated the Four Gospels in that language, or not, remains to be proved, but they certainly made transcriptions of it in full, or in part, for their own use and particularly that of their brothers in religion, the European missionaries who were very active among the Persian speaking christian nations.

Judging by the number of Gospels in Persian which, as we have seen, have belonged to or passed through Armenian hands, it is obvious that some merchants, pilgrims and itinerant monks of their nation, as mindful of their christian duties as of their own safety were, in certain cases, as a precautionary measure, carrying it preferably to the Gospels written in Armenian when travelling through hostile non-christian countries from China[226]

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[225] COSTELLOE, *op. c.*, pp. 345—346.

[226] BUCHANAN, *op. c.*, pp. 11—12 refers to the activities of Joannes Lassar, an Armenian native of China and very proficient in the Chinese language, who had been employed by the Portuguese authorities in Macao in conducting their official correspondance with Peking. Joannes Lassar was specially engaged by the College of Fort-William in Bengal to translate the Scriptures into Chinese. In 1807, a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew in that language, translated by Lassar and beautifully written by him was offered to the Archbishop of Canterbury for the Lambeth Library. Lassar translated chiefly from the Armenian Bible, but he also understood English and consulted the English version. His translation, supervised by the English Baptist missionary in India, Joshua Marshman (1768—1837), was printed at the Danish settlement of Serampore, near Calcutta, in 1810, being the earliest book of the Bible printed in Chinese by Protestant missionaries — cf. DARLOW & MOULE, *op. c.*, pp. 181—184. John LASSAR and Joshua MARSHMAN are also the authors of the earliest Chinese translation of the whole Bible in five volumes, printed by the Serampore Baptist Mission Press, 1915—1922. Cf. C. R. BOXER, *Exotic Printing and the Expansion of Europe, 1492—1892.* An Exhibit, Lilly Library Indiana University, 1972 p. 27: According to DARLOW & MOULE, pp. 181 to 184: «Though no evidence exists to prove that the Jesuits who began missionary work in China in the sixteenth century ever printed any considerable portion of the Scriptures in Chinese before 1800, yet translation of manuscripts were certainly current amongst them, and it is most probable that selections from these were printed and circulated in the eighteenth century». Citing J. WHERRY in *Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China,* held at Shanghai on 7th and 20th May 1890, p. 47: «Much of the substance of the Gospels and sketches of the more interesting historical narratives of the Old Testament were made at different times by different men and neatly printed and widely circulated. Copies of these, some yellow with age, some later reprints may still be found in the possession of old catholic families of Peking». — As regards Armenians in China, it is known that at the beginning of the XIVth century, a very rich Armenian lady residing at Kaï-Tou (likely to be Han-Tcheou-Fou today, capital of the Province of Tché-Kiang) had a magnificent church constructed to which the archbishop John of Monte-Corvino gave the title of cathedral, cf. letter dated January 1326 from André de Perouse, reproduced by M. HUC, *Le Christianisme en Chine, en Tartarie et au Tibet,* Paris 1857 T. I. p. 395; According to PELLIOT, *op. c.*, p. 145 «this testifies the presence at Han-Tcheou, at the end of the XIIIth and the beginning of the XIVth century, of an Armenian colony and even of a flourishing one as this Armenian lady had a huge wealth». According NAU, *op. c.*, p. 337, it was found in the Christian cemetery of Pispäk in the Eastern Turkistan a

and India to Persia and Turkey, or to Jerusalem or vice-versa. In other cases, Armenians living away from their motherland and forced by historical circumstances to learn and assimilate foreign languages, translated the Gospels in these idioms but remained faithful to the Armenian alphabet.[227] It has been the case not only, as already mentioned, of the translation made at the very beginning of the XVth century, of the extracts of the Gospels in Persian using Armenian writings,[228] but also in other languages, such as Kipchak[229] and Turkish[230] with Armenian scripts.[231]

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tomb where mention is made of Jean (I suppose Ohannes) «armenian» bishop, in an armenian inscription written in 1324 with a Syriac summary.

227 PAPAZIAN, *op. c.*, p. 224: «Historical circumstances have often obliged entire factions of Armenian people to learn and assimilate foreign languages, particularly those of their countries of residence, and furthermore to use them in current conversation. In Armenia itself, this more or less concerns the Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Azerbaidjani and a little Kurdish; and in large Armenian colonies in closer or more distant foreign lands, the Georgian, Kiptchak, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Roumanian, etc. To a certain extent influenced by political and historical conditions, the Armenians that were in contact with these peoples, and therefore spoke their idioms, were renouncing their own languages, though remaining faithful to the Armenian alphabet which they continued to use in their readings and writings».

228 ANASSIAN, *op. c.*, Vol. II cols. 539—542. List of Manuscripts of Persian translations in Armenian characters, extant at the State Matenadaran, Erevan.

229 There are, for instance, extant manuscripts of the Psalms and of Saint Paul's Epistles, written in Kipchak with Armenian characters, copied in Lwow in Ukrania (formerly Poland), during the last quarter of the XVIth century: cf. ANASSIAN, *op. c.*, Vol. II, cols. 546—547, a) Psalms in Armeno-Kipchak copied in Lwow in 1575 Cracovia Museum Narodawe (Oddzial Czartoryskich) rek 3546 fls. 12 r—258 r. Among further copies, one dated 1580 at Vienna K. K. Hof-Bibliothek Ms n. 13 and others dated 1581 at the Matenadaran, Erevan, Ms n. 81 and n. 2267. ZOFIA DUBINSKA, *Z Badán nad Psaterzami Ormianskimi w Jezyku Kipczackim* ... in *Z Pracowni Rekopisów Orientalnych* pp. 203—214; cf. p. 208 where she mentioned three Armeno-Kipchak Psalters in the Armenian Library of Saint-Lazarus in Venice n. 11, 359 and 1817. GREGORIO PETROWICZ, *I Copisti e scritori Armeni di Polonia nei Secoli XV—XVIII* in *Melanges Eugene Tisserant* Vol. III, Vatican 1969; pp. 156—160: *Gli Autori e traduttori in lingua Tartara (Kipcaca).* b) Epistles of St. Paul — Erevan, *Matenadaran* Ms 199, copied in Lwow in 1562, which is probably also the date of translation. The Armeno-Kipchak texts are important for the knowledge of the language spoken by the colony of Armenians living in the Polish-West Ukrainian and Moldavian Borderland in the XVIth and XVIIth century and represents an important link between the Codex Cumanicus and the living Tatar languages. Cf. E. SCHUTZ, *An Armeno-Kipchak Chronicle on the Polish-Turkish wars of 1620—1621,* Budapest 1968.

230 AVEDIS K. SANJIAN, *A Catalogue of Mediaeval Armenian Manuscripts in the United States,* University of California publications. 1976. Description of two manuscripts of Four Gospels both in Armenian and Turkish written in Armenian script, extant in the Freer Library of Philadelphia. Cf. pp. 660—663, Ms n. 116 translated in Constantinople in the year 1104 of the Armenian era, that is 1655 AD, by the «two Akneci brothers, deacon Azarea and Gaspar ... deeply versed in the language of the Turks», pp. 667 to 669, Ms n. 119 dating from the 17th—18th century. ANASSIAN, *op. c.*, Vol. II cls 531—536, *List of Manuscripts of the Four Gospels in Turkish with Armenian characters.* H. BERBERIAN, *La Litterature Arméno-Turque*, in *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta II*, 1964, p. 816, Berberian gives a list of some foreign books translated in Turkish and edited in Armenian characters.

231 At the beginning of the XIXth century, the usefulness of such translation was fully appraised by the very active Protestant missionaries, as an instrument of work among the Armenians. In 1819, the Russian Bible Society had the Four Gospels in Turkish with Armenian characters printed in St. Petersburg, then in Constantinople, and later

Important questions are still left unanswered in respect of the identification of the version of the Greek and Syriac models from which the earliest translations of the Gospels in the Persian idiom seem to have been made, and by whom, and when? Was the one rendered from the Greek dating back to the 13th or 14th centuries? The translation from Syriac made more or less at the same time, or as early as the 8th century?[232] It has to be left to New Testament and Oriental languages specialists – hoping only this work will encourage scholars – to undertake a comparative study of the two groups of these earliest translations to try and bring more light to respond to these intriguing interrogatives.

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on by the American missionaries in Malta. One of the copies printed in Saint Petersbourg, presently exhibited in the Library of the London and Foreign Bible Society, contains an interesting manuscript note inserted at the beginning, which I think is worth reproducing: «The Armenians residing in many parts of Turkey particularly in Caramania, Engria and Siwas as well as around Constantinople, have nearly lost the knowledge of the Armenian and understand no language properly but the Turk in which all business is transacted, in writing however they use only the Armenian characters. For the use of these Armenians, the scriptures have been printed in the Turkish language with Armenian characters. When Dr. Pinkerton was at Vienna in 1816 he was shown a version of the Psalms in two columns in Armenian and Turkish, the latter in Armenian characters, printed in Constantinople. In 1816 two separate copies of the Turkish Testament (printed in Paris) were made into the Armenian characters at St. Petersbourg, one by Seraphin, an Armenian archimandrite, the other by counsellor Clodstenetz, an old Armenian. The latter was preferred, and an edition of 5.000 copies (of which this one) was printed in St. Petersbourg in 1819 for the Russian Bible Society. A new version of the New Testament was made at Constantinople, under the superintendance of the Rev. H. Leeves, and another having been made by the American Missionaries in Syria, both versions were sent to Malta in 1828, where the Missionaries then were, that from both, a correct edition might be printed and an edition of 2 500 copies was printed at Malta in 1831 edited by Mr. Goodell one of the missionaries».

232 FISHEL, *op. c.*, p. 13 n. 34. Confronted with similar difficulties as to the question of origin, place and date of the Judeo-Persian Bible manuscripts, Fishel cites S. MUNK, *Notice sur R. Saadja Gaon et sa version arabe d'Isaie et sur une version persane manuscrite de la Bibliothèque Royale,* Paris 1838 in S. CAHEN, *La Bible* vol IX, pp. 134 to 159 cf. p. 139. According to him, MUNK's careful statement is still valid today «Que les versions ont été faites dans la seconde moitié du 13e. siècle ... quoique je ne puisse alléguer pour cela des preuves bien rigoureuses. Mais on peut dire avec certitude que les versions ne sont ni anterieurs au 13e. ni posterieurs au 14. siècle». E. G. BROWNE, *op. c.*, Vol I p. 479 considers that one of the Judeo-Persian manuscripts may possibly go back to the ninth or tenth century of our era, though other authorities place it in the Mongol period. — According to the *Enc. of Islam*, cf. *Supra* n. 116, Arabic translation of the Gospels were already available in the VIIIth century, while BUCHANAN, *op. c.*, p. 197 states that it is supposed that such Arabic translation was done about the IXth century.

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